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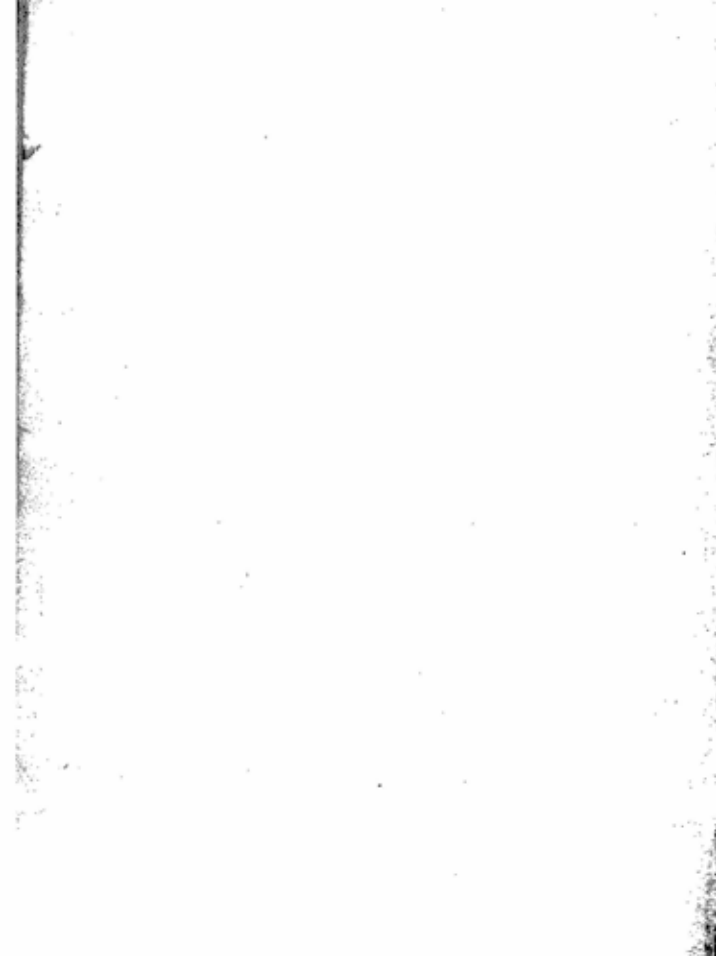
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THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN  
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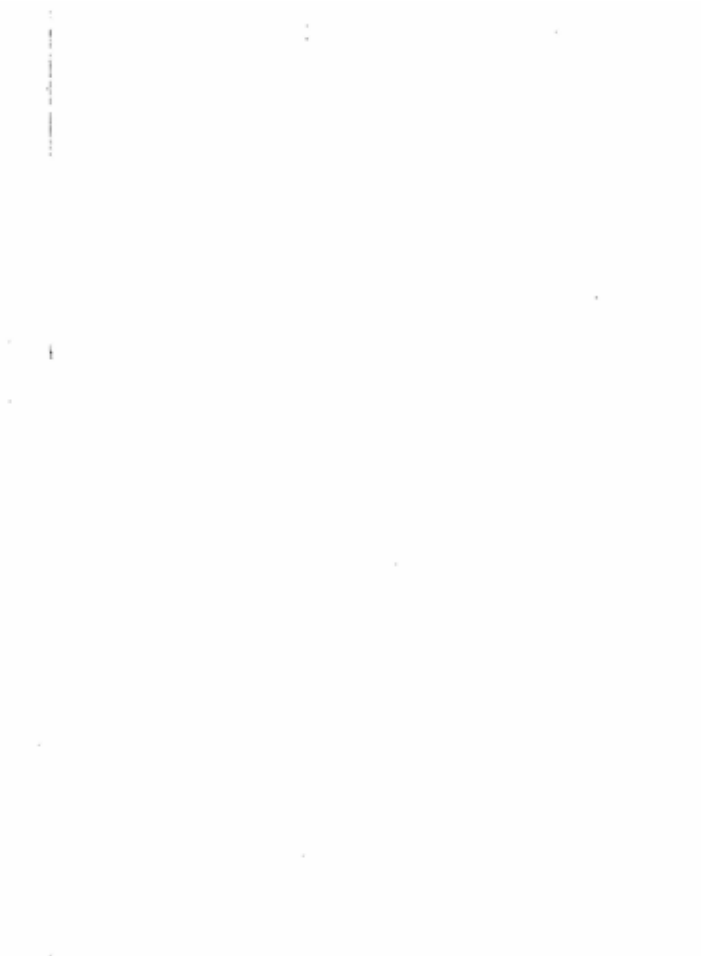
ELIHU JAN'S STORY

OR

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN EASTERN  
QUEEN



PRINTED IN ENGLAND  
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NASIRU-D-DIN

(Taken by permission from a bronze in the Lucknow Museum)

THE PRIVATE LIFE  
OF  
AN EASTERN KING

Together with

Elihu Jan's Story

or

The Private Life of an Eastern Queen

BY

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, LL.D.

FORMERLY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER IN OUDH

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY

S. B. SMITH, M.A.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, son of Richard I. Knighton and a member of the same family as his namesake Sir William Knighton, Keeper of the Privy Purse to George IV, was born in Dublin in 1833-4. He was educated at Glasgow and before he was twenty years of age became head master of the Normal School at Colombo. While in Ceylon he became the first Honorary Secretary of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and a partner in a coffee plantation. These activities are reflected in two books written by him at the time: *A History of Ceylon derived from native Chronicles*, and *Forest Life in Ceylon*, 1854, in which he describes some of his own experiences.

From Colombo he went to Calcutta as Professor of History and Logic at the Hindu College. In 1855 *The Private Life of an Eastern King* was published, and in 1860 Knighton was appointed by Lord Canning to the Oudh Commission, from which he retired in 1868. The preface of *Elihu Jan's Story* is dated from the Himalaya Club, Mussoorie, June 1864, and Knighton had also contributed 'Village Life in Oudh' to *Fraser's Magazine*. In 1883 he married Charlotte, daughter of Sir William Drake, K.C.B., member of the Legislative Council of the Cape of Good Hope, and on March 31, 1900, he died at St. Leonards, aged 66.<sup>1</sup>

Literary interests continued to engage much of Knighton's time after his retirement from India. In 1887 he was

<sup>1</sup> For the above details see *Men and Women of the Time*, 15th ed., 1899, Victor G. Marr (Routledge), pp. 604-5; also *The Times* obituary notice, April 6, 1900. See also addendum pp. xi, xli.



Vice-President of the Royal Society of Literature, London, and about this time wrote *Struggles for Life*—a book which attracted considerable notice not only in London but also in Paris and Berlin. In 1889 he was selected to unveil the statue erected to the memory of Shakespeare in Paris, where he was Vice-President of the International Literary and Artistic Society, and he also received the degrees of M.A., Ph.D., and LL.D. from Giessen University.

In addition to the books already mentioned, William Knighton was the author of *Tropical Sketches*; or *Reminiscences of an Indian Journalist* (2 vols.), *Edgar Barton, An Autobiographical Novel* (3 vols.), *European Turkey as it is* (1854), *Training in Streets and Schools*.

## II

It is more than sixty years since Oudh became a province of British India, and the old days of the Oudh kingdom are rapidly passing into oblivion. Lucknow is studded with memorials of the nawabs and kings in brick and plaster, but the present generation has for the most part forgotten even the names of their builders, and *Badshahi Waqt*—the time of the kingship—has become a synonym for the distant past.

The two books republished in this volume have long been difficult to obtain, and are of peculiar interest because they give a vivid and intimate picture of the character of the Lucknow court. There are many other accounts of the court of Oudh, but the visitors to whom we owe them saw only the externals of royalty—the king was always on his best behaviour. Knighton, on the other hand, gives us a picture of Nasiru-d-din and Wajid Ali Shah as they appeared to their own chosen companions and servants.

*The Private Life of an Eastern King* was first published in the spring of 1855, while the annexation of Oudh was

under discussion. A second edition appeared a few months later. *Elihu Jan's Story* was published in 1865, when Knighton was an assistant commissioner in Oudh. It is clear that he approved of the policy of annexation, and that these books were intended to justify that policy by a plain statement of the abuses that existed under the kings of Oudh. Whether all the incidents and conversations actually took place as related or not, it is abundantly evident from a perusal of the correspondence of the Residents published in the *Oudh Papers*, and from other sources such as Sleeman's *Journey through Oudh*, that the picture Knighton gives of the Lucknow court is not too highly coloured.

Mr. Hilton in his *Guide to Lucknow* cites a passage giving the names of 'the five European associates of his (Nasiru-d-din's) dissipation, viz. the barber (de Russett, whose son, a merchant of that name, was killed in the Cawnpore massacre of 1857); tutor (Wright); painter and musician (Mantz); librarian (Croupley); and Captain Magness'.

It is uncertain which of the five was Knighton's informant; from internal evidence it would appear to have been the librarian; it certainly was not 'the scoundrel with whose evil deeds all Lucknow is still ringing', as the reviewer of this book in the *Calcutta Review* of 1855 calls the barber. Perhaps the barber was not as black as he is painted. In his account of Cawnpore in 1857 and 1858 Mr. Sherer describes a meeting with this man. 'One morning, Joseph brought a gentleman whom he said he wished to introduce to me, and a ginger-whiskered Englishman, past middle-age, of moderate stature, walked in, whom I discovered to be the celebrated Mr. de Russett, celebrated at least to those who have read *The Private Life of an Eastern King*. For he was the very barber, to whose

skill the elaborate locks of Nusr-ood-Deen Hyder bear testimony in the effigies of him to be seen in the Moosa Bagh at Lucknow. In later interviews, he declared to me that the book was a pure romance, but he was too interested a party to be received as an impartial critic. One thing he stoutly declared, which I thought not unlikely, namely that the conversations between the king and the librarian were purely imaginary ; in proof of which he urged that the king knew only two or three words of English, whilst the librarian was equally ignorant of Hindustani. All traces of past life had disappeared if they ever existed, from the appearance of Mr. de Russett, and he bore every aspect of a quiet well-to-do tradesman.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that Knighton had not visited Lucknow himself when he wrote this book. His description of the city and of Mohurram are at second hand. He refers to his indebtedness to Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations on the Mussulmans of India* ;<sup>2</sup> he also seems to have made free use of the article on the Kingdom of Oudh contributed by Sir Henry Lawrence to the *Calcutta Review* of 1845, and of Bishop Heber's account of Lucknow. A few copies of Sleeman's *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh* had already in 1853 been privately printed and submitted to Government, though the book was not published until five years later ; apparently Knighton had not had access to it, or he would hardly have ascribed to Raja Bakhtawar Singh, as he does, the unpleasant experiences that happened to Ghulib Jang.<sup>3</sup>

*The Private Life of an Eastern King* undoubtedly had

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Mutiny*, Maude and Sherer (Rimington & Co.), 3rd ed., 1894.

<sup>2</sup> In Chapters IX and XII of *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, and Chapters VI, VII, VIII of *Elihu Jan's Story*, the author's debt to Mrs. Mir Hassan Ali is far greater than his acknowledgement.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 109.

a considerable influence, published as it was when the fate of Oudh was under discussion; it was referred to in Parliamentary debates and translated into French, whilst a second edition was called for in 1856.

## III

9 1544, 1727 The dynasty of the Nawab Wazirs was founded by a Persian adventurer, Muhammad Amin, who was appointed Subahdar of Oudh by the Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1720, as a reward for his share in putting an end to the tyranny of the king-making brothers Abdullah and Husain Ali, the Saiyads of Barhi. He received the title Sa'adat Khan, Burhanu-l-Mulk, and like his great rival, the Nizam, made his province virtually independent of the tottering empire. At his death in 1739 he left an orderly country and, in spite of the exactions of Nadir Shah, a well-filled treasury to his nephew and son-in-law, Safdar Jang.

A warrior like his uncle, the new Nawab played a vigorous part in the intrigues and wars of that troublous time, and on the accession of the Emperor Ahmad Shah in 1740 was created Wazir of the empire. The duties of this office were generally performed by a deputy at Delhi, while the Nawab Wazir, as he now came to be called, continued to rule his subah. Safdar Jang died in 1756 and was succeeded by his son Shujau-d-daulah, who was also given the hereditary appointment of Wazir by Shah Alam in 1760. 8/ 4/ II

The close connexion between Oudh and the East India Company, which continued until the annexation of the country in 1856, began during this reign.

X Clive's victory at Plassey had made the Nawabi of Bengal subordinate to the Company. When Mir Kasim rebelled against an intolerable position and attempted to recover independence, he was defeated in several

engagements, and in November 1763 fled over the border into Oudh. Shujau-d-daulah welcomed the fugitive; the two nawabs combined their forces, and taking with them the exiled Emperor Shah Alam, invaded Behar, where they were decisively beaten by Major Hector Munro in the hard-fought battle of Buxar, October 23, 1764.

This victory not only completed the work of Clive by establishing the Company in firm possession of Bengal and Behar, it also placed at its mercy the dominions of the Nawab Wazir by right of conquest. The Company was, however, averse from any extension of its territorial responsibilities, and decided to restore Oudh to Shujau-d-daulah, who had in the meantime surrendered to the British commander. Accordingly a treaty was concluded at Allahabad in 1765 by Clive and Carnac, plenipotentiaries 'on behalf of Nabob Nudjum-ul-daulah Subahdar of Bengal, Behar and Orissa' and of the Company, with Shujau-d-daulah. By this treaty the Nawab was reinstated in his possessions, excepting the districts of Allahabad and Korah, which were made over as an appanage to the emperor, perpetual peace and friendship were to exist between the contracting parties, and the Company undertook 'in case the dominions of His Highness Shujah Dowlah should at any time be attacked' to 'assist him with such forces as the exigency of his affairs might require, and that 'in such case the extraordinary expense of the forces so employed were to be defrayed by him'.

This defensive alliance was by subsequent treaties gradually developed into a relation of subsidiary dependence—the Company maintaining a regular force of its own troops in Oudh and in return receiving a regular subsidy.

x | By the treaty of Allahabad, Oudh ceased to be an independent state; its nominal dependence upon the

emperor was, in fact, converted into actual subordination to the Company. As Sir John Shore wrote in 1797 : 'The government of Oude, both in the opinion of the natives, as well as externally, is considered a dependency upon the English, whatever its relations under treaties may be. In the estimate of the natives of India, the kingdom of Oude is held as a gift from the Company to Shujah-u-Dowlah, and as a dependent fief.'

It would have been better for Oudh and for the reputation of the Company if the country had been annexed outright. As a buffer state between the Bengal Presidency and the Marathas, Oudh was in a peculiar position. For half a century (1770-1820) the menace of the Marathas was the dominating factor in Indian politics, and hidden behind the Maratha menace lay the menace of the French. The Mahomedan victory at Panipat in 1761 had given a respite, which allowed the establishment of British supremacy in Bengal to pass unchallenged. But the Marathas rapidly recovered from this defeat. Ten years later Sindhia was ruling the emperor, and raising in his name a fine army, trained and officered mainly by Frenchmen. The Holkar, the Peshwa, the Bhosle had again become rulers of powerful states. These Maratha states constituted a standing danger to Bengal ; against this danger, Oudh was the first line of defence. To strengthen this first line, Warren Hastings, in 1773, when the emperor had placed himself in the hands of Sindhia, restored Allahabad and Korah to the Nawab Wazir. Similar considerations dictated his policy in the Rohilla war. 'If', he wrote to the directors, 'the Marathas either by defeat, or, which was as likely to happen, by the desertion of the Rohillas to their cause, should gain a footing in that country, nothing could oppose their entering into the province of Oudh and laying it waste

in spite of any attempts of our forces to prevent them. . . . There was every reason to apprehend, and it was publicly reported in their own camp, that they would next carry their operations into the country of the vizier, and even into the Company's own possessions.'

Much has been written in condemnation of the Company's conduct towards Oudh, and the charge of faithlessness and rapacity in abrogating old treaties and exacting new conditions has often been brought against it. Unfortunately politics can rarely be conducted according to a purely ethical standard, and in judging the treatment of Oudh by such men as Warren Hastings and Wellesley, we must never forget that they were driven by the imperious necessity of defending Bengal; that Oudh was inevitably caught in the fringe of the worldwide war with France; and that the preservation of Oudh from the curse of Maratha invasions would have been cheaply bought at a much higher price than that which was actually paid.

Shujau-d-daulah died in 1775 and was succeeded by his son Asafu-d-daulah, who removed the capital from Fyzabad to Lucknow, to escape from the influence of the Begums—his grandmother, known as the Nawab Begum, the strong-minded daughter of Burhanu-l-Mulk, and his mother, the Bahu Begum. These ladies, contrary to the wish of Hastings, but with the consent of a majority of the council at Calcutta, were permitted to retain as private property the treasure of the late king, in addition to very considerable jaghirs in various parts of Oudh. They were thus enabled to maintain a rival court at Fyzabad, which was a centre of disaffection and intrigue against the influence of the Company and the ministers of the Nawab.

From his boyhood Asafu-d-daulah had indulged a taste for low companions and mean pleasures. When he came

to the throne his habits did not change, and he took little or no interest in the business of administration. Under these circumstances the Company steadily tightened its grip upon Oudh. By a new treaty, concluded in 1775, the Nawab's dominions were formally brought into a condition of subsidiary dependence upon the Company. Asafu-d-daulah engaged to dismiss all Europeans from his service and in future employ none without the sanction of the Company, whilst the Company engaged to maintain a permanent brigade, known as the Cawnpore Brigade, for the defence of Oudh and its dependencies; the subsidy payable for the services of a brigade was raised from Rs. 2,10,000 per month to Rs. 2,60,000; and all claims upon the districts of Ghazipore, Jaunpur, and Benares dependent on Raja Chait Singh, were ceded to the Company. Soon after this treaty had been concluded the Nawab asked for the services of a second brigade, owing to the disturbed condition of the country, and the utter absence of discipline among his own troops. Accordingly a 'Temporary Brigade' was raised and stationed at Farrukhabad. Already there were considerable arrears due on account of the subsidy and other debts, with the result that 'the demands during seven years of Mr. Hastings's administration averaged one hundred lakhs annually, while in spite of constant screwing, the receipts only seventy lakhs; leaving in 1781 a deficit of two and one-tenth crores of rupees (£2,100,000). To meet this frightful item there was a materially reduced revenue.'

To enable the Nawab to meet these liabilities, Warren Hastings readily assented to the proposal to confiscate the property of the Begums, who by their notorious hostility and abetment of the rebellion of Raja Chait Singh had forfeited any claim upon the consideration of the Company.



He also agreed to withdraw the Temporary Brigade, but political and military exigencies prevented him from carrying out this promise; a decision confirmed by Lord Cornwallis, who, while limiting the subsidy to fifty lakhs a year, refused to withdraw any of the Company's troops from Oudh.

In 1795 Haider Beg Khan, who had been minister for nearly twenty years, died, and the government fell into the hands of worthless favourites, until Sir John Shore himself visited Lucknow in 1797 and prevailed upon the Nawab to appoint as his minister Tafazzul Husain, a man in whom the British Government had confidence. A few months later Asafu-d-daulah died. He left his mark upon Lucknow in the numerous baghs and palaces with which he adorned the city—among them the Residency of immortal fame. It might have been expected that after a peaceful reign of twenty-three years Oudh would be in a prosperous condition, but this was by no means the case. Asafu-d-daulah never took any interest in the administration; it was controlled by the minister, and carried out for the most part by chakladars, who farmed the revenue and acted as judicial and executive officers in their districts. The normal method of collecting the revenue was by military force, the weak were squeezed without mercy, while great landholders who were strong enough to defy the chakladar's troops escaped payment altogether. The public revenues decreased and land went out of cultivation, while the revenue-collectors amassed fortunes and estates, as did the ministers and other officials whom they found it expedient to gratify.

A reputed son, Wazir Ali, who had been purchased by Asafu-d-daulah, as an infant, but never formally adopted, was proclaimed Nawab, with the consent of the Resident and the Governor-General. He proved to be a man of

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vicious habits and ferocious temper, bitterly hostile to English influence. The minister urged his deposition. Sir John Shore again visited Lucknow, and after a careful inquiry was satisfied that Wazir Ali had no claim to the throne either by birth or adoption. He therefore deposed him and placed upon the masnad Sa'adat Ali, a brother of Asafu-d-daulah, who since 1776 had been living under British protection at Benares.

On his accession Sa'adat Ali was required to sign a fresh treaty, whereby the fort of Allahabad was made over to the Company to be used as an arsenal—and the subsidy was increased to 76 lakhs a year. The Company undertook the entire defence of the Nawab's dominions, both against internal and external enemies, and for this purpose was to maintain a constant force of 10,000 men in Oudh.

A few months later Wellesley became Governor-General at a most critical period in the history of British India. Napoleon was in Egypt, threatening an invasion. The Sultan Tipu of Mysore was in open alliance with France, his army trained and drilled by French officers from Mauritius; the Nizam was completely under the influence of the Frenchman Raymond, commander of his bodyguard; while in Hindustan the army that de Boigne had raised for Sindhia was now commanded by General Perron, a bitter foe of the British, and officered by about three hundred Europeans, mostly French. Moreover, Zaman Shah, in alliance with Tipu, was threatening an invasion of Oudh and the Company territories.

The Nawab's troops were mutinous and utterly inefficient. They were dissatisfied at the deposition of Wazir Ali, who had won them over by 'unbounded largesses'; indeed, when that miscreant, after the murder of Mr. Cherry and other Europeans at Benares, fled to the Gorakhpur

district, many of the troops sent against him by the Nawab joined his rebel force; and Sir James Craig, the general in command of the army collected to repel Zaman Shah, describes them as 'totally undisciplined, mutinous, licentious, and many of the battalions not armed. I always thought them both useless and dangerous.'

Wellesley decided that this useless and dangerous force must be disbanded and replaced by a proportionate number of Company's troops. Sa'adat Ali was at first eager for this reform, but when the immediate dangers by which he was threatened passed away, he drew back, being unwilling to increase the subsidy. His objections were overruled by Wellesley's insistence; the greater part of the Nawab's force were disbanded, and replaced by twelve battalions of infantry and four regiments of cavalry at an annual cost of 50 lakhs.

This was not enough to guarantee the safety of the frontier. The subsidy due from Oudh now amounted to 126 lakhs; irregularity or failure of payment might be attended with most disastrous consequences, especially in time of war. Adequate security for the regular payment of such a sum was only to be obtained by a thorough reform of the whole administration. To effect this Wellesley proposed that a treaty should be arranged with the Nawab, similar to that recently concluded with the Rajah of Tanjore, by which 'the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company'.

This proposal the Nawab rejected *in toto*. He would rather abdicate altogether. As an alternative, a surrender of territory yielding revenue equal to the subsidy, was demanded. In vain the Nawab protested. By the Treaty of Lucknow (November 1801) he ceded to the Company

in absolute sovereignty ten districts, comprising all the territories south and west of the Ganges, the Rohilkhand district, as well as Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, and Basti on the east. The whole of the dangerous marchland became British territory, and the defence of Oudh and Bengal was for the first time placed on a satisfactory footing. The Treaty of Lucknow marks the end of the first and the beginning of the second phase in the relations between Oudh and the Company. Hitherto the dealings with Oudh had been confined to matters of subsidy and defence. Henceforward British interference was directed towards the improvement of the internal administration.

By article 4 of the Treaty of Lucknow the Nawab had undertaken 'to establish in his reserved dominions such a system of administration (to be carried into effect by his own officers) as shall be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and to be calculated to secure the lives and property of the inhabitants; and His Excellency will always advise with and act in conformity to the council of the officers of the said Honourable Company'. During the subsequent thirteen years of his reign Sa'adat Ali showed himself an able and vigorous administrator. Searching reforms were introduced into the system of revenue collection, the *ijarah* system of farming the revenues of a district to a contractor being largely superseded by the *amani* system, direct collection by the Government; large grants of rent-free land made by his predecessors were resumed, and the prosperity of the country was fostered by the protection of the ryots. 'He is still remembered,' wrote Irwin in 1880, 'even by the large landholders—whom to keep in check was one of the chief aims of his policy—as the best, wisest, and strongest administrator whom the province has ever known.' At his death he left a well-

filled treasury. The charge of extortion and parsimony is sufficiently refuted by the prosperity of his territories, and the numerous palaces and the public buildings he erected ; it arose, as Sleeman has pointed out, largely from the aversion of British officers to being employed in exacting revenue from refractory zemindars, and from the uncompromising way in which he cut down the profits and perquisites of worthless sycophants.

Sa'adat Ali Khan died on July 11, 1814, and was succeeded by his second son, Ghaziu-d-din Haider, a man of about forty years of age. During his father's lifetime he had been deliberately kept in the background, and allowed to take no part in public affairs ; he had not even been permitted to learn English, although Sa'adat Ali, owing to his long residence in Benares, spoke it with ease. ' He was fond, however, of study, and in all points of oriental philology and philosophy is really reckoned a learned man, besides having a strong taste for mechanics and chemistry.' A well-meaning man, but weak and superstitious, with his nerve broken by indulgence in intoxicating drugs and liquors, he easily fell a prey to the influence of the unscrupulous but able minister Agha Mir.

For the first few months of his reign he retained in office Hakim Mehdi, a minister in whom Sa'adat Ali reposed full confidence, having committed to his charge the management of revenue and official affairs, and managed the whole of the business of the state in concert with him until his demise.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately Hakim Mehdi was not on good terms with the resident, Major Baillie, who by his want of tact and domineering conduct had become obnoxious to the Nawab. An attempt was therefore made by Ghaziu-d-din to secure the removal of the Resident

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Nasiru-d-din Haider, dated April 1831. *Oudh Papers*.

when Lord Moira visited Lucknow in the autumn of 1814. The Governor-General was disposed to accede to the Nawab's request, but the latter was persuaded by Agha Mir that these complaints would be taken amiss by the Governor-General, and was induced to withdraw them. The result of the intrigue was that Hakim Mehdi was deprived of office, and Agha Mir appointed in his place.

This man had originally entered the Nawab's service as a khitmatgar, and in that capacity had waited behind the prince's chair when the latter dined with Lord Moira at Cawnpore. Ten years later Heber describes him as a 'dark, harsh, hawk-nosed man, with an expression of mouth which seems to imply habitual self-command struggling with a naturally rough temper'. The influence of the Padshah Begam and of the Resident was on his side, and he gained a complete ascendancy over the Nawab. He looted the country without scruple: according to Nasiru-d-din, in addition to his salary of Rs. 25,000 a month 'Agha Mir took from this country the annual sum of Rs. 23,00,000 by his own admission, and Rs. 33,00,000 agreeably to the accounts in the office. The property and jewels of the state which he plundered are out of the question.'<sup>1</sup> He rejected every project of reform urged by the British Government, 'and yet so able was his administration that in his time the capital and its environs were as safe and well governed as any city in India'.<sup>2</sup> Under his administration the abuses that Sa'adat Ali had striven to eradicate revived, the evil system of farming the revenue again prevailed; the army was increased for the purposes of revenue collection, and the country was impoverished.

In the spring of 1818 the Marquis of Hastings again

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Nasiru-d-din. *Oudh Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> Maddock. Memorandum on the State of Oudh. *Oudh Papers*.

visited Lucknow. In his Diary, under date March 5, he writes: 'We breakfasted at the palace of Furrugh Baksh, with the Nawab, after a contestation in the preliminary durbar, where I obliged him to take the right of me on the musnud. I insist on considering him an entirely independent sovereign, not as the Vizier of the Moghul Empire in India.' In the following year, at the instance of the British Government, Ghaziu-d-din formally adopted the title of the King of Oudh. He had lent the Company two millions sterling towards the expenses of the Nepal War, and this grant of the royal title, together with certain Terai districts conquered in the war, was an inexpensive method of discharging the obligation. Moreover, in view of the generous pecuniary assistance of Ghaziu-d-din, the Marquis of Hastings felt that it would be ungracious in him to further urge those measures of reform that had been inaugurated under pressure by Sa'adat Ali Khan. When Lord Amherst became Governor-General he summoned the king to a durbar at Cawnpore, in which he strongly represented the need for reforms, but nothing had been done in that direction when Ghaziu-d-din died in October 1827.

There is good ground for the belief that Nasiru-d-din Haider, who succeeded Ghaziu-d-din and is generally supposed to have been his son, was in reality no kin to him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The secrets of the zenana are almost impossible to unravel, but the following extracts support the above statement.

'Ghozee-ood-Deen had no son and one only daughter, who married her cousin and had issue Mossem-ood-Doulah, the true heir to the throne. Ghozee-ood-Deen, instead of leaving the throne to his true heir and grandson Mossem-ood-Doulah, left it to Nusseer-ood-Deen Hydur, a boy whom the king declared to be his own son by a slave girl, but who, they say, is in reality a son of a dhobi belonging to the palace. The English are aware of these facts.'—Parks, *Wanderings in Search of the Picturesque*, i. 188.

'Report assigns to the king himself a birth not more respectable than that of either of his ostensible sons.'—Minute to Vice-Pres.

This belief is confirmed by the conspicuous absence in the character of Nasiru-d-din of any trace of that sense of dignity which usually belongs even to degenerate members of a princely race, and which was not wanting to the other descendants of Burhanu-l-Mulk. Sir John Shore, writing in 1835, describes him as 'a profligate and a sot devoid of sense, who thinks of nothing but his own licentious pleasures, and of the indulgence of every whim. When anything annoys or vexes him he has recourse to drinking, to drown thought.'<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Lawrence writes in even stronger terms: 'Engaged in every species of debauchery, and surrounded by wretches English, Eurasian, and native of the lowest description, his whole reign was one continued satire upon the subsidiary and protected system. Bred in a palace, nurtured by women and eunuchs, he added the natural fruits of a vicious education to those resulting from his protected position. His Majesty might one hour be seen in a state of drunken nudity with his boon companions, at another he would parade the streets of Lucknow driving one of his own elephants. In his time all decency, all propriety, was banished from the court. Such was more than once his conduct that Colonel Low, the Resident, refused to see him or to transact business with him.'<sup>2</sup>

His principal wife, Sultana Boa, daughter of Mirza

C. T. Metcalfe, dated Polt. Dept., September 24, 1831, *Oudh Papers*, ii. 28.

'His present majesty was born after thirteen months'. Statement by Mahomed Ali Khan, *Oudh Papers*, ii. 27.

'A letter was said to have been intercepted from the Padshah Begam to the address of the late Mr. Secretary Stirling, to the effect that the present king was not the son of Ghaziu-d-din Haider; and that the proper heir to the throne of Oudh was Mossen-ud-Daulah, a son of Padshah Begam's daughter.'—Sd. J. Low (Resident), February 3, 1832, *Oudh Papers*.

<sup>1</sup> Shore, *Indian Affairs*, ii. 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Calcutta Review*.



Suleiman Sheko, and grand-daughter of the Emperor Shah Alam, is said to have been 'so disgusted at her marriage with Nasiru-d-din, and looked upon him as a man of such low caste, that she never allowed him to enter her palace'.<sup>1</sup> She left the court and lived in retirement on a small pension. Her place was filled by a rapid succession of more appropriate sultanas, notorious amongst them Dulari, the daughter of a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, who was introduced into the palace as foster mother to Nasiru-d-din's reputed son, Munna Jan.<sup>2</sup> This woman took the fancy of the prince, and in 1826 was married to him and received the title of Malika Zamani. For a year she exercised great influence over her husband, inducing him to repudiate Munna Jan, and to acknowledge her own son, afterwards known as Kaiwan Jah, as heir-apparent. It is not known who was the father of this boy, but he was already three years old when his mother first met Nasiru-d-din. In spite of the remonstrances of the Resident, Nasiru-d-din adhered to his recognition of Kaiwan Jah, 'and even wrote to the Governor-General himself that Kaiwan Jah was his eldest son and heir-apparent, and as such he was sent to Cawnpore to meet and escort over Lord Combermere in December 1827.' Five years later, in February 1832, the king repudiated both Kaiwan Jah and Munna Jan, assuring the Resident that he was not the father of either.

During Ghazlu-d-din's reign Agha Mir had incurred the resentment of the prince; after his accession to the throne

<sup>1</sup> Parks, *Wanderings*, etc. ii. 192. The extract quoted by Knighton in *Elihu Jan's Story*, pp. 331 sq., refers to the wives of Nasiru-d-din, not Wajid Ali Shah.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Maddock made a careful inquiry as to the parentage of Munna Jan, and came to the conclusion that he was not Nasiru-d-din's son. Evidence is recorded in the *Oudh Papers*.

a show of reconciliation took place, and Agha Mir was retained in office for a few months—until December 1827, when he was dismissed. The ex-minister wished to retire into British territory, but the king refused him permission to remove his property, and for four years he was kept a prisoner in his own house under a guard provided by the Company's troops. Several attempts upon his life were made—even the Residency surgeon was offered a bribe of £10,000 to poison him ; at length, through the mediation of the British Government, he was permitted to retire to Cawnpore, where he died soon afterwards.

He was succeeded as Wazir by a protégé of the Padshah Begam, Fazl Ali, whose sole title to distinction is that during his fourteen months of office he amassed a fortune of thirty-five lakhs of rupees. Under his administration and that of his two successors, Ram Dayal and Akbar Ali, the condition of Oudh went from bad to worse. The streets of Lucknow and the roads in the immediate vicinity were the scene of nightly robberies and murders ; the outlying districts were in a state of chronic rebellion, and the army of 40,000 men which was scattered over the country to strengthen the hands of the local authorities was unable to secure the payment of revenue. The Resident reported that the country had reached such a stage of decline that nothing but the assumption of the administration could preserve it from utter ruin, and in 1831 Lord William Bentinck warned the king that unless improvement and reforms were introduced, there was no alternative but for the British to take over the control of the administration.

The one man capable of carrying out the necessary measures of reform was Hakim Mehdi, who had already (1830) been recalled from his exile at Fatchgarh and appointed minister. Of his honesty and ability Lord

William Bentinek held a very high opinion, which was shared by the Resident, Mr. Low. The former records his opinion in a minute of July 1831. 'He is indisputably one of the ablest men in India, and is not surpassed by any other individual whether European or native as a revenue administrator. My hope has always been and is that, able as he certainly is beyond all other men to reform the administration, so, cordially assisted by the Resident, he will be equally willing to accomplish this great object.'

Hakim Mehdi, now known as Muntazimu-d-daulah, set energetically about his Herculean task, and effected great reforms during the period of less than two years that he retained office. In a great part of Oudh the *amāni* system of revenue collection was substituted for the *ijarah* system of farming the revenue to contractors; corruption was suppressed by exemplary punishment of offending officials; the undisciplined army was reduced in numbers, and an efficient police force was organized.<sup>1</sup>

Such thoroughgoing reforms could not fail to arouse hostility in many quarters, and the minister's supercilious demeanour increased the hatred with which he was regarded by those whose illicit profits he had curtailed. All sorts of ridiculous charges were concocted against him and in spite of the vigorous remonstrance of the Resident, Hakim Mehdi was dismissed from office in August 1832.

His successor, Roshanu-d-daulah, was chiefly employed in looking after his emoluments, while the real authority devolved on the personal favourites and associates of the king. Sleeman states that 'the salary of the prime minister during the five years that Roshanu-d-daulah held the office was Rs. 25,000 a month, and over and above this he had five per cent. upon the actual revenue, which made

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Despatch from Major Low, dated June 13, 1832. *Oudh Papers*.

about six lakhs a year. His son as commander-in-chief drew Rs. 5,000 p.m., though he did no duty ; his first wife drew Rs. 5,000 p.m., and his second wife drew Rs. 3,000 p.m.; total Rs. 85,000 a month, or ten lakhs and Rs. 56,000 a year. These were the avowed allowances which the family received from the public treasury. The perquisites of office gave them some five lakhs of rupees, full 15 lakhs a year.' In other words during these five years one-tenth of the total revenue of the country found its way into the pockets of the minister every year.

The disastrous results of Hakim Mehdi's dismissal may be gauged by the fall in the revenue. For the five months Oct. 1831-Feb. 1832, it had been Rs. 40,36,000 ; for the corresponding months of the following year it fell to Rs. 18,24,000.

Towards the end of his life Nasiru-d-din went in constant fear of poison. 'He had a small well in the palace, over which he kept his own lock and key ; and he kept the same over the jar in which he drew the water from it for his own drinking. The persons who gave him his drink, except when taking it out of English sealed bottles, were two sisters, Dhuncea and Dulwee.' It is generally believed that Roshanu-d-daulah employed these women to poison the king 'in the expectation that the British Government would take upon itself the Oudh administration', in which case he hoped that no inquiry would be made into his ill-gotten gains. It is satisfactory to know that the successor of Nasiru-d-din dismissed him from office, and kept him in jail until he had disgorged twenty-two lakhs of rupees.

Nasiru-d-din Haider died on the night of July 7, 1837. The British Government had long provided for this event, and in 1832 the Resident had been instructed to recognize as the rightful heir Nasiru-d-daulah, an uncle of the king.

Before Nasiru-d-daulah could be proclaimed and placed upon the musnud, the Padshah Begam, widow of Ghaziu-d-din Haider, intervened, and, forcing her way with a rabble of followers into the throne-room, proclaimed Munna Jan. 'A scene more wild, more utterly bizarre, than the Farhat Baksh palace presented from midnight to morning can hardly be imagined. The dead body of the late king lay in one chamber; his uncle and successor, the respectable but decrepit Nasiru-d-daulah, sat cowering in fear of his life in another, while a furious mob of matchlockmen and dancing girls filled the Lal Baradari, or great hall of state, with mad acclamations in honour of Moona Jan and the Padshah Begam.'<sup>1</sup> Until the arrival of troops from cantonments, Colonel Low and his assistants were in imminent peril; and it was not until the guns had opened fire that the throne-room was cleared. Nasiru-d-daulah was then formally enthroned, assuming the title of Muhammad Ali Shah. Munna Jan and the Begam were placed in confinement at Chunar.<sup>2</sup>

The Resident had long and bitter experience of the defects of the Oudh constitution as it existed under the treaty of 1801. The principal defect was that whereas the Nawab had undertaken to establish 'such a system of administration, as shall be conducive to the prosperity of

<sup>1</sup> Irwin, *Garden of India*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Nasiru-d-Daulah was the third son of Sa'adat Ali Khan. Shamsu-d-daulah, the eldest son, had died during his father's lifetime, leaving four sons. By the Mohammedan law such sons are known as Majhub-ul-irs and are excluded from inheritance. They had already been passed over in favour of Ghaziu-d-din Haider, and were now again passed over in favour of their uncle. Captain White advocated the claims of the representative of this branch, Ikbalu-d-daulah, in a pamphlet *The Prince of Oudh*. Amjad Ali Shah succeeded Muhammad Ali Shah by virtue of the same law, Mumtaza-d-daulah, son of his elder brother, being excluded because his father Asghar Ali had died during Muhammad Ali Shah's lifetime.

his subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and property of the inhabitants', no sanction was provided in the event of this stipulation being evaded, except the right to withhold the assistance of the Company's auxiliary troops—a wholly ineffective deterrent.

To remedy this defect Colonel Low exacted from Nasiru-d-daulah, before placing him upon the gaddi, an undertaking that he would accept a new treaty to be dictated by the Governor-General. While sympathizing with the end in view Lord Auckland disapproved of the constraint that had thus been put upon the king; nevertheless a new treaty—the treaty of 1837—was drawn up and accepted by Muhammad Ali. The chief innovation in this treaty was an article which embodied the substance of the warning given to Nasiru-d-din by Lord William Bentinck. Article 7 provided that 'if gross and systematic oppression, anarchy, and misrule should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oudh dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity, the British Government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portions of the Oudh territory, either to a small or to a great extent, in which such misrule . . . may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary'. This treaty was not approved by the Court of Directors and was never ratified by them, but it undoubtedly bore fruit in the amelioration of the administration in Muhammad Ali's time. Unfortunately the king was an old man incapable of bringing to the administration that vigour which a reforming programme demanded. He did his best and appointed respectable ministers. Hakim Mehdi was recalled, but died within a few months, and his successors in office might have been capable of carrying on a good administration but were incapable of initiating one.

A glimpse of Lucknow in the cold weather of 1837 is given in the letters written by the Hon. Emily Eden<sup>1</sup> to her sister. She accompanied her brother, Lord Auckland, in a cold-weather tour, and spent a few days in Lucknow while the Governor-General remained at Cawnpore, etiquette not permitting him to visit Lucknow because the king was bedridden and so unable to receive him fittingly.

Muhammad Ali died in May 1842, and was succeeded by his second son, Amjad Ali Shah. Under this king all the old abuses burst forth again with increased vigour. Incompetent favourites were appointed to office, and bribery and corruption once more flourished in Oudh. In 1845 Sir Henry Lawrence, in an article in the *Calcutta Review*, thus describes the condition of the country.

'The condition of Oudh is yearly becoming worse. The revenue is yearly lessening. There are not less than 100,000 soldiers in the service of Zemindars. In more than half the districts of Oudh are strong forts, most of them surrounded with dense jungles, carefully rendered as inaccessible as possible. Originally, the effect of a weak or tyrannical government, such fortresses perpetuate anarchy. The amils and other public officers are men of no character, who obtain and retain their position by court bribery. Only the weak pay their revenue; those who have forts, or who by combinations can withstand the amil, make their own revenue arrangements. Throughout the country nothing exists deserving the name of a judicial or magisterial court. The newswriters are in the pay of the amils, generally their servant; nevertheless not less than a hundred dacoities, or other acts attended with violence and loss of life, are annually reported; how many hundreds then pass unnoticed. . . . In short the government of the country is utterly palsied; its constitution

<sup>1</sup> *Up the Country*, vol. i, chaps. viii and ix.

is altogether destroyed ; no hope remains. Were any vitality left in Oudh, the country has, during the last twelve years, had a fair opportunity of recovering. If the system of a king, a minister, a Resident and a protecting army could subsist without ruin to the country so ruled, it has had a trial. The scheme cannot be said to have failed for lack of good instruments. The Oudh rulers have been no worse than monarchs so situated usually are, indeed they have been better than might have been expected. Weak, vicious, and dissolute they were, but they have seldom been cruel, and have never been false. In the storms of the last half century, Oudh is the one single native state that has invariably been true to the British Government ; that has neither intrigued against us nor seemed to desire our injury. It is the system that is defective, not the tools with which it has been worked. We have tried every variety of interference, we have interfered directly, and we have interfered indirectly ; by omission as well as by commission, but it has invariably failed.'

Two years after these words were written Lord Hardinge visited Lucknow and reiterated in more explicit terms the warnings of Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland. The chief evils of the existing system were recapitulated, and two years' grace was granted for the introduction of a substantial measure of reform, failing which the administration would be taken over from the Oudh government by British officers.

But Wajid Ali Shah, who was now upon the throne (acc. February 13, 1847), had no interest in affairs, no genius for administration ; ' neither stupid nor unamiable, possessing a genuine interest in literature, and some reputation both as a poet and prose writer, it was his misfortune to be placed in a position that made the happiness of millions dependent on him.' *Elihu Jan's Story* gives a sufficiently accurate picture of the way in which he frivelled



away his days in effeminate amusements amongst his singers and women while the country remained a prey to the tyranny of the tax-gatherer and the horrors of private war. As a result of Lord Hardinge's admonition an abortive scheme of partial reform was drawn up, but when this fell through no further efforts were made by king or minister to effect improvement.

The Oudh Question was thrust into the background during the early years of Lord Dalhousie's administration owing to the Sikh and Burmese wars, with the unfortunate result that as no action was taken by the British Government on the expiry of the two years allowed by Lord Hardinge's ultimatum, the authorities in Oudh believed that a definite order forbidding interference had been sent by the Home authorities. 'So that ministers, talookdars, and other official men, have now less fear of incurring the displeasure of the Resident, or of giving offence to the British Government—as far as mismanagement of the interior administration of Oudh gives offence to the paramount state—than they ever had previous to Lord Hardinge's visit to Lucknow.'<sup>1</sup>

In January 1849, Colonel Sleeman succeeded Colonel Richmond as Resident, a post which he filled until 1854, when owing to ill-health he was succeeded by Colonel Outram. He reports (June 1849) that

'none of these reforms have yet been introduced, save that some of the districts formerly farmed have been made over to servants of Government, bearing the names of "tahsildars"; but in this there is little real change, for the greater part are bound to send to the treasury a certain sum and are made to give security that they will do so. There is the same perpetual collision between the collectors of revenue and the land-holders. The

<sup>1</sup> Minute by Major-Gen. Low, dated March 28, 1855, *Oudh Papers*, p. 147.

troops of the collectors, without discipline and with little and uncertain pay, prey upon the people, and depopulate all the villages along the high roads over which they march, and in the neighbourhood of their encampments. The Zemindars, the moment they are driven from their strongholds, or deprived of their estates for defalcation, become robbers and murderers, upon as large a scale as their means in armed followers will admit, and render the roads and rivers alike unsafe to all the public servants of the British Government, and European ladies and gentlemen. . . .

'I do not think his Majesty can ever be brought to feel the responsibilities of sovereignty strongly enough to be induced to bear that portion of the burden of its duties which must necessarily devolve upon him. He will always confide it to the worthless minions who are kept for his amusements, and enjoy exclusively his society and confidence. The only persons save the females who now see and speak to the king, are the minister, the singers, and the eunuchs. The minister is obliged to succumb to these singers and eunuchs, and conform to their will, or he would not hold his place. They meddle in all affairs, and influence the king's decision in every reference made to him; and the responsible agents in whose name the order is given dare not complain.'<sup>1</sup>

During the cold weather of 1849-50 Colonel Sleeman made his famous *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh*,<sup>2</sup> to see with his own eyes the actual condition of the country. The result of this tour of inspection was to confirm the opinion which he had already formed in the capital that no alternative save British intervention remained.

When Colonel Outram was appointed Resident in 1854 he received instructions 'to make an inquiry into the present

<sup>1</sup> Minute by the Governor-General, June 18, 1855, *Oudh Papers*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>2</sup> Some extracts from this book will be found in the concluding chapter of *Elihu Jan's Story*.

state of that country [Oudh], with a view to determine whether the duty imposed upon the British Government by the Treaty of 1801 will in truth any longer admit of our honestly indulging the reluctance we have felt to have the recourse to those extreme measures which alone can be of any real efficacy in remedying the evils from which the state of Oudh has suffered so long'.

These officers—Sleeman and Outram—have been styled 'the emissaries of a foregone conclusion'. In a sense this is true, for the anarchy prevalent in Oudh was notorious. At the same time it must be said that Lord Dalhousie could not have found two men for this responsible duty, who throughout the whole course of their careers had shown more sympathy with the cause of the native states or were more averse from indiscriminate annexation.

An exhaustive investigation into all branches of the administration, the results of which were embodied in a minute dated March 15, 1855, only served to confirm the conclusions of Colonel Sleeman.

Upon these reports Lord Dalhousie wrote an elaborate minute, in which he reviewed our relations with Oudh from their beginning. The history of the previous half-century led him to the conclusion that there was no hope of securing a tolerable administration in Oudh unless the sovereign be required 'to vest the exclusive administration of the civil and military government of Oude and its dependencies in the hands of the Company'.

Lord Dalhousie did not advise the annexation of Oudh, although he firmly believed that that would be the happiest issue that could be devised for the interests of all connected with it. Still, in recognition of the uniform loyalty of the dynasty to the Company, he proposed to maintain the

nominal sovereignty of Wajid Ali Shah and his successors ; to repudiate the Treaty of 1801, thus severing all connexion between Oudh and the Company ; and then to invite the king to agree to a fresh treaty by which the civil and military administration of Oudh was to be handed over to the British Government in perpetuity.

The members of the Governor-General's council each wrote a minute concurring in the necessity for the assumption of the administration by the Company, though they differed as to the method of carrying this into effect, two of the four members, Mr. Dorin and Mr. Grant, recording their opinions in favour of annexation pure and simple.

These representations were forwarded to the Court of Directors, and in January 1856 their reply was received. It sanctioned, rather dubiously, the measures Lord Dalhousie proposed to adopt, and, that there might be no mistake as to the intentions of Government, stated that, in the event of the king rejecting the proposed treaty, ' We are fully prepared to take the responsibility of authorising and enjoining the only other course by which our duties to the people of Oude can be fulfilled, that of assuming authoritatively the powers necessary for the permanent establishment of good government throughout the country.'

Major-General Outram, who was then at Calcutta, was directed to give immediate effect to this decision, and for this purpose received detailed instructions from Lord Dalhousie. A draft treaty was prepared for the king's acceptance, by the terms of which he and his successors were to be permitted to retain the title and dignity of king and enjoy sovereign rights within certain specified areas—the Palace in Lucknow, and the parks at Bibiapur and

Dilkusha. An ample allowance, 15 lakhs (£150,000) a year, would be provided for the king and his successors, whilst Article 1 stipulated that 'the sole and exclusive administration of the civil and military government of the territories of Oude, shall be henceforth vested, for ever, in the Honourable East India Company with the full and exclusive right to the revenues thereof.' If within three days after the presentation of this treaty it had not been accepted and ratified by the king, General Outram was instructed to publish a proclamation repudiating the Treaty of 1801, on the ground that it had been constantly violated by the neglect of the rulers to establish a tolerable system of government, and declaring the annexation of the Oudh territories. There was to be no delay in carrying the business through, the decision was irrevocable, and no reference was to be permitted to the Governor-General in Calcutta.

General Outram reached Lucknow on Wednesday, January 30, and at once communicated to the Prime Minister, Ali Naqi Khan, the intentions of Government; on the following day he explained the proposals in detail, that the king might not be taken by surprise, but might be fully informed on all points before the treaty was formally presented to him for signature. At this interview the Resident requested that the king would fix an early date for this formal presentation. On the afternoon of Friday, February 1, in response to a request from the queen-mother, General Outram was glad to visit her, 'as she has much influence with the king, her son, and is a sensible woman, I could not have a better channel for conveying advice to His Majesty.' The interview was a painful ceremony, and apparently the Resident did not succeed in persuading the queen, who appeared deeply moved, to use her influence with Wajid Ali

Shah to induce him to sign the treaty. If she did, it was counteracted by that of other advisers, among whom General Outram mentions a Cawnpore merchant named Brandon, proprietor of a newspaper, the *Central Star*, who hoped to be deputed by the king as his agent to England, assuring Wajid Ali that he would procure his restoration.

On Monday, February 4, General Outram accompanied by his assistants, Captains Hayes and Weston, waited upon the king by appointment at the Zard Kothi Palace. The king had disarmed his troops—whether to avert the possibility of armed resistance, or to arouse their compassion and indignation, is not clear—and when the Resident reached the Palace it was unusually deserted: ‘the detachments of artillery on duty, together with the detachments of His Majesty’s Foot Guards, were unarmed, and saluted without arms; the artillery was dismounted, and not a weapon was to be seen among the courtiers and officials present.

‘During the conference, in addition to the Prime Minister, His Majesty’s brother Sekunder Hashmat, the Residency Vakil Muhsec-ood-Dowlah, his deputy Sahib-ood-Dowlah, and the minister of Finance Rajah Balkishen, were present.’

The Resident then delivered the Governor-General’s letter to the king, who after reading it turned towards the Resident and said, ‘Why have I deserved this? What have I committed?’

When the draft treaty was presented the king handed it to Sahibu-d-daulah with directions that it should be read out aloud; but that confidential servant of the king, overcome by his feelings, was unable to read but a few lines;

on which the king took the treaty from his hands, and carefully perused each article.

His Majesty then gave vent to his feelings in a passionate burst of grief, and exclaimed :

‘Treaties are necessary between equals only : who am I now that the British Government should enter into treaties with ? For a hundred years this dynasty has flourished in Oudh. It has ever received the favour, the support, and protection, of the British Government. It had (*sic*) ever attempted faithfully and fully to perform its duties to the British Government. The kingdom is a creation of the British, who are able to make and unmake, to promote and to degrade. It has merely to issue its commands to ensure their fulfilments ; not the slightest attempt will be made to oppose the views and wishes of the British Government ; myself and subjects are its servants.’

Muhsee-ood-Dowlah hereupon observed that His Majesty had issued orders that all his guns should be dismounted and his troops disarmed, which His Majesty immediately repeated, and declared that the Resident must have observed how defenceless and incapable of resistance were his soldiers and subjects.

His Majesty then again spoke of the inutility of a treaty ; he was in no position to sign one. It was useless ; his honour and country were gone ; he would not trouble government for any maintenance, but would proceed to England, and throw himself at the foot of the throne to entreat a reconsideration of the orders, and to intercede for mercy. Uncovering himself he placed his turban in the hands of the Resident, declaring that now his titles, rank, and position were all gone, it was not for him to sign a treaty or enter into any negotiation. He was in the hands

of the British Government, which had seated His Majesty's grandfather on the throne, and could at its pleasure consign him to obscurity.

Thus the exit of His Majesty Abul Mansur, Nasiru-d-din, Sikunder Jah, Muhammad Wajid Ali Shah Padshah was not wanting in a certain pathetic dignity.<sup>1</sup>

The king persisted in his refusal to sign the treaty, and on February 7, when the three days' grace had expired, General Outram formally assumed charge of the whole administration of the country in the name of the East India Company.

A sufficient military force to suppress any opposition likely to be offered had been concentrated at Cawnpore, and under the command of Brigadier Wheeler, crossed the Ganges into Oudh on January 31. It advanced by slow marches to the vicinity of Lucknow, but its services were not needed. The change of government took place without any disturbance. This happy absence of any violent outbreak is, in part, to be attributed to the action of the king, who had issued a proclamation to all officials and subjects exhorting them 'to take heed to obey all orders which may be issued, and to pay the revenue to them, and to become faithful subjects to them : on no account resort to resistance and rebellion'.<sup>2</sup>

The ex-king's departure from Lucknow on March 13 occasioned a spontaneous demonstration of grief amongst the inhabitants. He arrived in Calcutta two months later ; and, as he was not permitted to proceed to England, took up his residence at Garden Reach. His mother, Janab

<sup>1</sup> Note of an interview between the King of Oudh and Major-Gen. Outram, *Oudh Papers*, 1856, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Oudh Papers*, 1856, p. 290.



Aliya Begam, accompanied by his eldest son, and his brother Mirza Sikander Hashmat proceeded to England in the S.S. *Ripon*. They were still in England when the mutiny broke out : they then retired to Paris, where they continued to reside until the death of the queen-mother.

As a measure of precaution, the ex-king was arrested in June 1857, and detained as a state prisoner in Fort William until July 1859. He then returned to Garden Reach, where he enjoyed his pension of twelve lakhs a year, until his death in 1887.

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The subjoined are extracts from two letters that appeared in the *Pioneer* in May and June 1918 (when Section I of this Introduction was in the press) from the son-in-law and grandson of William Knighton. They are reprinted here by the kind permission of the editor.

The late William Knighton, LL.D., went to Ceylon about the year 1845 to look after a coffee estate which had been left to him by an uncle. Finding that planting did not pay he sold the estate and proceeded to Calcutta, where he remained about three years. During his sojourn there he wrote his first two books, *Forest Life in Ceylon* and *Tropical Sketches*. Returning to London he became associated with the literary clique which included Carlyle and Emerson. Whilst in Calcutta he made the acquaintance of a member of the household of the late King of Oudh who, I believe, was 'the tutor', but whose name I am unable to give without a reference to Mr. Knighton's papers, which is impossible at present as they are in England. Later, in London, he again met this gentleman and about 1856, when residing at Sydenham, he wrote *The Private Life of an Eastern King* from materials supplied to him by the above-named 'member of the household'. Sub-

sequently, about 1858, Mr. Knighton received a nomination in the I.C.S., and proceeded to Fyzabad in 1859 as Assistant Commissioner at that station. This was the first occasion on which Mr. Knighton was ever in Oudh. He only remained in the Oudh Commission, however, for about ten years, as being in a position to consult his own tastes, which were essentially literary, he returned to England in 1868 and devoted the remainder of his life to those pursuits.

#### HIS SON-IN-LAW.

*Pioneer*, May 1918.

He very nearly succeeded in getting the Knighton Baronetcy revived in his own person ; but he was a Liberal, and the return of the Conservatives to power extinguished that hope.

He married, about 1850-1, Miss L. Mackay (belonging to a well-known Scotch family), and they had two children : Edgar, a boy of great promise, who died at school ; and a daughter, who first married Dr. J. H. Condon (retired about 1896, as Brigade-Surgeon-Colonel, I.M.S.), who was for twenty-two years Civil Surgeon at Cawnpore, and whose eldest son I am.

JAMES KNIGHTON CONDON,

Lieutenant-Colonel, I.A.

Kolhapur, 9th June.

## LIST OF RESIDENTS AT LUCKNOW

1. Mr. Nathaniel Middleton	Jan. 1773-Feb. 1775
2. „ Bristow	Feb. 1775-Dec. 1776
3. „ Nathaniel Middleton	Dec. 1776-Nov. 1779
4. „ C. Purling	Nov. 1779-Nov. 1780
<sup>1</sup> 5. „ Nathaniel Middleton	{ Nov. 1780-Feb. 1781
„ Bathurst	
„ Nathaniel Middleton	{ Feb. 1781-Oct. 1782
„ Bristow	
<sup>2</sup> 6. „ Bristow	Oct. 1782-Dec. 1783
7. „ E. Otto Ives	Oct. 1785-March 1794
8. „ G. F. Cherry	March 1794-July 1796
9. „ John Lumsden	July 1796-May 1799
10. Col. Scott	1799-
11. „ John Collins	-1808
12. Capt. John Baillie	1808-1816
13. Mr. Richard Strachey	1816-1818
14. „ John Monckton	1818-1821
Major F. V. Raper (Assistant)	1821
15. Lt.-Col. Paris Bradshaw	1822
Major F. V. Raper (Assistant)	1822-1823
16. Mr. Mordaunt Ricketts	1823-1830
17. „ Maddock	1830-1831
18. Col. John Low	1831-1843
<sup>3</sup> 19. Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B., Envoy.	1843-1845
20. Col. A. F. Richmond, C.B.	1845-1849
21. „ W. H. Sleeman	1849-1856
22. „ Outram	1856

<sup>1</sup> From 1780 to 1782 the Residency was in commission. Mr. Middleton was entrusted solely with management of financial relations between the Nawab and the E. I. C.

<sup>2</sup> Owing to the Nawab's complaints against Mr. Bristow the Residency was withdrawn from December 1783 until October 1785. The duties of the office were carried out by (1) Major Palmer, (2) Colonel Harper.

<sup>3</sup> Col. Caulfield and Mr. Davidson discharged the duties of Resident during the years 1842-1846, but their names do not appear in the official list in the East India Register.

# GENEALOGY OF NAWAB WAZIRS AND KINGS OF OUDH

Sa'adat Khan Burhanu-l-Mulk, 1732-1739

Nawab Aliya Sadru nissa Begum = Mansur Ali Khan, Saifdar Jang, 1739-1753

Shuja-u-d-daulah  
1753-1775

Arafa-d-daulah  
1775-1797

Vizier Ali : (deposed), 1797

Ghazi-u-d-din Haider  
N 1814-1819  
K 1819-1827

Nasiru-d-din Haider  
1827-1837

Munna Jan <sup>1</sup>

Sa'adat Ali Khan  
1797-1814

Nasiru-d-daulah, Muhammad  
Ali Shah  
1837-1842

Asghar Ali Khan

Amjad Ali Shah  
1842-1847

Mumtazu-d-daulah <sup>2</sup>

Mustafa Ali :

Wajid Ali Shah  
1847-1856

Mirza Sikander  
Hashmat

Mirza Sulaiman  
Qadr.

<sup>1</sup> Paternity dubious.

<sup>2</sup> Repudiated by his father for misconduct.  
<sup>3</sup> Passed over in succession under law Majhub-ul-irs (see p. xxviii n.).

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THE  
PRIVATE LIFE  
OF  
AN EASTERN KING

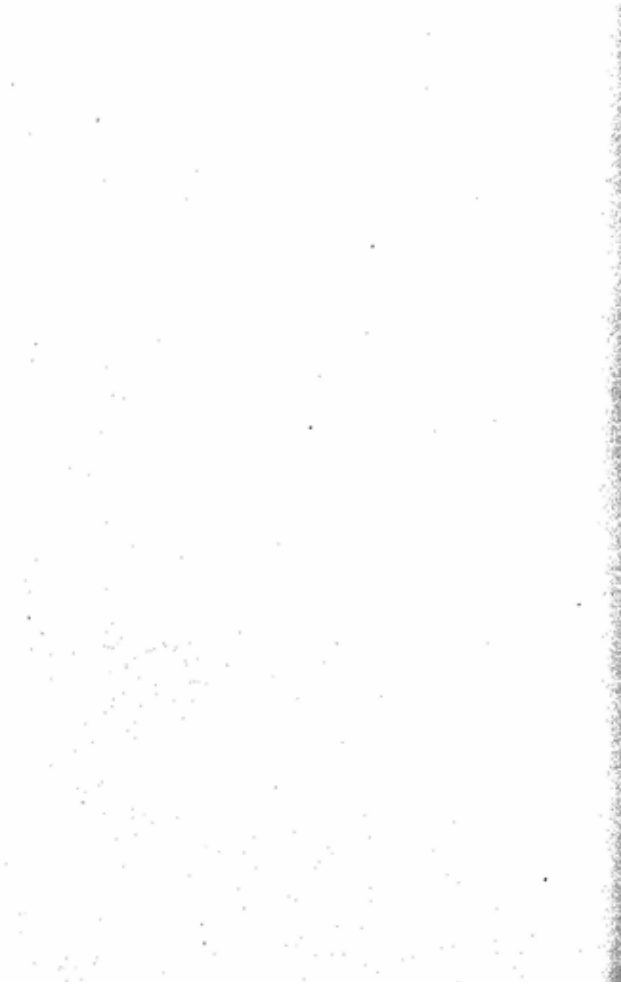
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COMPILED FOR A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF HIS  
LATE MAJESTY, NUSSIR-U-DEEN, KING OF OUDH

---

BY  
WILLIAM KNIGHTON

AUTHOR OF 'FOREST LIFE IN CEYLON,' 'TROPICAL SKETCHES,'  
ETC. ETC.



# PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

BY THE COMPILER

SOME of the incidents recorded in the following chapters were the subjects of conversation at a friend's house in the autumn of 1854. I made the acquaintance of the narrator—the 'Member of the Household';—and, thinking the facts strange, I proposed to him to write a book on the subject. He was by no means unwilling. Chapter after chapter was compiled from his notes and verbal communications, and read out to him as each was finished. The 'Member of the Household', however, would not put his name to it; so the work was at first issued anonymously.

Personally I have had no knowledge of the circumstances related in the following pages; but, since they were committed to writing, abundant proofs of the truth of the narrative have been forthcoming. 'The book comes before us,' said the *Times*, 'without a name, but with every other mark of authenticity.' I may add, that there is scarcely a fact narrated in it, of which I have not had some indirect or direct corroborative evidence, since it was first issued in May last.

W. K.

CHELSEA, *October*, 1855.



# PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

BY THE 'MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD'

THE following narrative is a record of facts—not in any case fictitious. It has been compiled from the notes I took of passing events during the three and a half years that I lived in the court of Lucknow.

Nussir-u-deen has long been gathered to his fathers ; but the principal European members of his household are still alive, and in England. I have not given their names or my own ; for the public would know as little of the one as of the other, had I done so. Should the truth of my statements be denied, however, or the names considered necessary to substantiate the narrative, I shall have no hesitation in giving them all.

It would have been easy for me to have thrown something of the heroic into the account of my residence at the court of Lucknow ; but I have adhered simply to the truth, and have endeavoured solely to describe the inner life of the palace as I found it. Much there was that was strange—much there was that was horrible about that life : I witnessed many scenes which I could not describe without offending against conventional propriety ; but, in all that the reader will find recorded, exaggeration has been strictly guarded against.

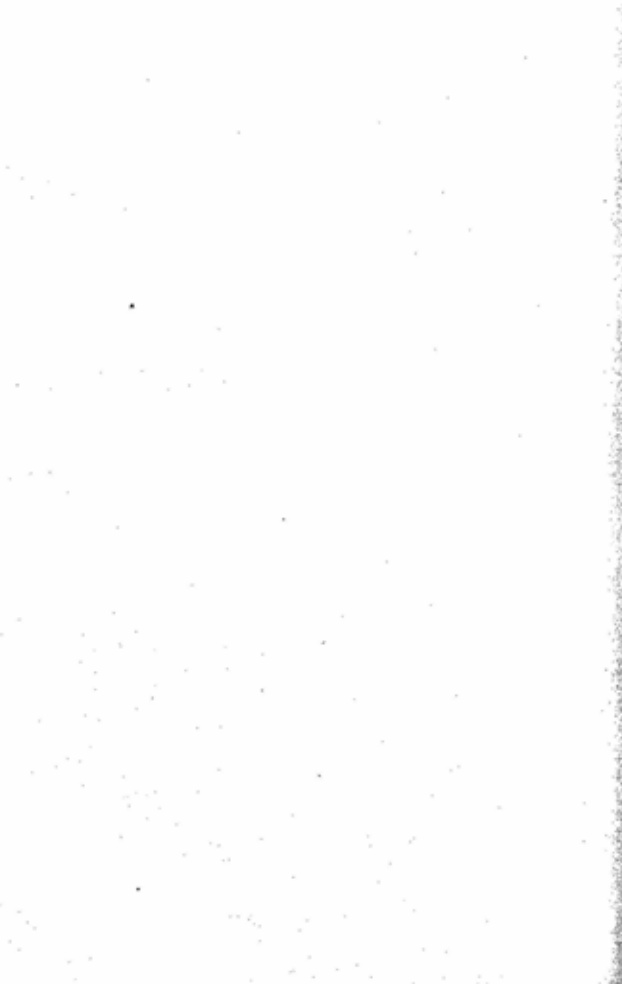
That Oudh is one of the most miserably-governed countries under heaven, is no secret ; and that it would be a blessing to its numerous inhabitants were the Indian government to do for it what has been so well done for the Punjab, every one will admit. I have not written a political disquisition, however, but simply a personal narrative ; and therefore the state of the country is but incidentally alluded to occasionally in the following pages.

My task is done.

LONDON, October, 1866.

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# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN EASTERN KING

## CHAPTER I

### MY INTRODUCTION TO ROYALTY

Aspect of Lucknow—Armed citizens—Beasts of burden—Oudh a province and a kingdom—The Durbar—Private audience with the king—The Nuzza—The troubles of royalty—Studies—The barber—Drawing near the dinner-hour.

It is now more than twenty years since business first took me to Lucknow. Nussir-u-deen, the son and successor of Ghazi-u-deen, the first king, was then upon the throne of Oudh.

Strange tales I had heard in Calcutta of the peculiar features of Lucknow and its court—of the extensive menagerie maintained by the king—of his fondness for Europeans not in the Company's service—of the warlike tastes and bearing of the inhabitants of Oudh, and the abundance of matchlocks, shields, spears, and swords, to be seen borne by fierce-looking fellows in the streets of Lucknow. I had heard much of all these things, and expected to be disappointed, as I had been before frequently. I was not disappointed, however. For once, the reality exceeded my anticipation.

The great extent of the buildings, generally called the king's palace, surprised me in the first place. It was not properly a palace, but a continuation of palaces, stretching all along the banks of the Goomty, the river on which Lucknow is built. In this, however, the royal residence in Oudh but resembled what one reads of the seraglio at Constantinople, the Khan's residence at Teheran, and the imperial buildings of Peking. In all oriental states, the palaces are not so much the abode of the sovereign only,

as the centre of the government ;—little towns, in fact, containing extensive lines of buildings occupied by the harem and its vast number of attendants, containing courts, gardens, tanks, fountains, and squares, as well as the offices of the chief ministers of state. Such was the case in Lucknow. One side of the narrow Goomty—a river not much broader than a middling-sized London street—was lined by the royal palace ; the other was occupied by the *rumna*, or park, in which the menagerie was maintained. The extent of this collection of animals, and its variety, exceeded anything that I had supposed possible. Elephants in scores, tigers, rhinoceroses, antelopes, cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, lynxes, Persian cats, Chinese dogs, might all be seen sunning themselves in this park, either in their cages, or stretched listlessly on the grass, as commonly as sheep and cows in an English meadow.

There was nothing grand or striking about the exterior of the palace—the *Fureed Buksh*,<sup>1</sup> as it is called. Its extent was the only imposing feature about it, and struck me far more forcibly than any magnificence of architecture or loftiness of structure would have done ; for I was prepared for the latter, whilst for the former feature I was not prepared.

Nor did the streets of Lucknow disappoint me. The streets around the palace have been compared to Dresden by Bishop Heber ; others have declared that Lucknow resembled Moscow. I have never been in either city ; but I should fancy they cannot be very like each other. The only large city, that I have been in, which resembles the lower part of the town, in its narrow streets, its laden camels, and its bazaars, is Grand Cairo in Egypt. Dresden, Moscow, Cairo—there is room enough here for choice ; and yet in all these no counterparts will be found to many of the most striking characteristics of Lucknow.

In the first place, with respect to the armed population,<sup>2</sup> we shall find nothing similar in any of these places. The

<sup>1</sup> Farhat Baksh.

<sup>2</sup> A swarm of beggars occupied every angle and the steps of every door, and all, or nearly all, the remaining population were,

people of Moscow may wear knives about their persons, and in Calro you may occasionally see men with arms in their hands; but in Lucknow every man goes armed. With matchlock or gun or pistol most probably; with a short bent sword, called a *tulwar*, and a shield certainly, you find every man in Lucknow pass you by. Even those engaged in the ordinary business of life have their tulwars; whilst the idlers have both pistols and shield as well, however otherwise mean their attire. The shield of buffalo-hide, with brass knobs for the most part, is usually thrown up upon the left shoulder; and with the fierce-looking moustaches of the Rajpoots and Patans, and the black beards of the Mussulmans, tulwar and shield together give an eminently warlike air to the swaggering figures of the self-sufficient citizens. Nor is it wonderful that the population of Lucknow should be warlike in its aspect; for Oudh is the great nursery of soldiers for the Company's army. The forces of the Bengal presidency come almost exclusively from Oudh.

The love of arms is fostered from infancy in the inhabitants of Lucknow. An arrow or a spear is the usual plaything of the boys there; small wooden models of tulwars and pistols are put into the hands of the babies, just as English nurses give their children rattles to play with.

The streets of the town presented therefore an eminently novel aspect to me. It was as if I had found myself transported suddenly into some of the scenes of which I had read in childish histories and novels, in which all the men are heroes, and show their heroism in their gait and manners.

to my surprise, as much loaded with arms as the inhabitants of the country, a circumstance which told ill for the police of the town, but added considerably to its picturesque effect. Grave men in palanquins counting their beads and looking like Mullas had all two or three sword and buckler lackeys attending on them. People of more consequence, on their elephants, had each a *sauarree* (*sauari*, train of mounted followers) of shield, spear, and gun, and even the lounging people of the lower ranks in the street and shop doors, had their shields over their shoulders, and their swords carried sheathed in one hand.'—Heber, *Narrative*, ii. 53

Nor in Cairo or Moscow would you find elephants used as the ordinary beasts of burden. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the incongruity between the huge animals and the narrow confined streets in which they have to travel. One of them blocks up the entire road; just as the laden camel, with his huge net at either side, full of goods, does in Cairo. In Lucknow elephants and camels are almost equally common. In the lower and filthier parts of the town, where the bazaars are situated, horses are seldom seen, elephants and camels are the common labourers. For a long time I could not see an elephant or a laden camel sweeping down one of these narrow lanes without feeling an almost irresistible inclination to laugh aloud, even when I was endangering my own safety by remaining exposed too long.

Then there is the contrast, too, between the Hindu and the Mussulman population, resembling each other only in the arms which they carry—in every other respect unlike. Lucknow is a city of about 300,000<sup>1</sup> inhabitants, of whom two-thirds are probably Hindus, generally of the lower orders; the Mussulman population is somewhat aristocratic, for the court is Mussulman.

But perhaps my readers know nothing of the country of which Lucknow is the capital. In a few words I shall be able to give them some definite information on the subject. That there is a sauce called 'the King of Oudh's sauce', and that—

'The King of Oudh is mighty proud,'

are two facts which may be learned from the shop-windows in London, and from that veracious chronicler, Charles O'Malley,<sup>2</sup> respectively.

When Lord Wellesley went out to India as governor—

<sup>1</sup> In 1856 the population of Lucknow was estimated at 600,000–700,000. Hutchinson, *Narrative of Events in Oudh*, p. 18. By census of 1911 the population was 259,798.

<sup>2</sup> *Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon*, by G. Lever. Oudh is properly pronounced as rhyming with proud; not as if spelt Oode, as the geographers often tell us. [W. K.] The correct spelling is Awadh.

general, towards the end of the last century, Oudh was larger than England. It had been a province of the Great Mogul empire, and its ruler was called the Nawab Vizier. Warren Hastings, by plundering two of the female members of the Nawab's family, and torturing their attendant eunuchs to extort treasure from them, had made the Nawab of Oudh known to quiet people in England some years before; for Burke had thundered forth his indignant denunciations of Hastings' conduct, and the Nawab of Oudh was looked upon in Europe as an ill-used gentleman: the fact being, that he was delighted his predecessor's widows, the Bhow Begum and another, should have been plundered, and not he; for he was only his predecessor's son by adoption.<sup>1</sup>

When Lord Wellesley went to India, as I have said, Oudh was larger than England, and had always been the most faithful ally of the British.<sup>2</sup> His lordship rewarded its fidelity by annexing half of it to the Bengal presidency. He could not find any better way of recompensing the people for the good faith of their rulers than by putting them under his own government.

The Marquis of Hastings *borrowed* two crores of rupees from Ghazi-u-deen, that is, two millions of pounds sterling, and, in return for the loan, gave the Nawab a barren tract of land at the foot of the Himalayas called the Terai—a tract conquered from Nepal—and with it the title of king: *His Highness the Nawab* was changed into *His*

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is full of inaccuracies. (a) Warren Hastings neither plundered the Begums nor tortured their eunuchs. The conduct of Warren Hastings in this matter has been fully vindicated. s. Sir George Forrest, *Administration of Warren Hastings*, ch. v. (b) Of the Begums in question only one, Jenab 'Aliya Muta-aliya, the Bahu Begum, was a widow of Shujāu-d-daulah; the other Nawab 'Aliya Sadrunissa Begum—or, shortly, the Nawab Begum—was Shujāu-d-daulah's mother, the widow of Safdar Jang. (c) Asafu-d-daulah was not an adopted son. His father was Shujāu-d-daulah and his mother the Bahu Begum.

<sup>2</sup> I. e. since the Treaty of 1765. The Nawab Wazir had joined Mir Kasim and Shah Alam and been defeated with them at Buxar; s. *Introd.* xvii.



*Majesty the King*; and Ghazi was fain to be content, or at all events to appear so.<sup>1</sup> It was in 1819 that Ghazi became the anointed of the Company; and in 1827 he was succeeded by his son, Nussir, a young man of about thirty years of age when I visited Lucknow.

In its present contracted dimensions, Oudh is a triangular piece of country, stretching from Nepaul to the Ganges: its broader proportions skirting Nepaul upon the north, its narrower end resting upon the sacred river on the south. It slopes gradually from north-west to south-east, the only high land it contains being the strip so generously given up by the Marquis of Hastings after the Nepaulese war. This district, the Terai, is very populous—with wild beasts; and is rich—in jungle.

Stripped as it has been of its rupees and its most valuable provinces by successive governors-general, Oudh is still more populous<sup>2</sup> than any of the German states in Europe, except Prussia and Austria; whilst in extent it exceeds that of Denmark; of Holland and Belgium put together; of Switzerland, Saxony, and Wirtemberg, could they be united. In Europe it would be a country superior to any of these, rivalling Bavaria or Naples in importance; in Asia it is considered as a mere trifle, about which a great deal too much has already been said.

It was private business, as I have already stated, that took me to Lucknow. I went there in the ordinary routine of mercantile life, not as an 'adventurer'—a name once so hateful to the Honourable Company. Through

<sup>1</sup> I have only related above what is matter of history. 'Most assuredly,' says a writer who urges the annexation of all Oudh, 'most assuredly Warren Hastings, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord Auckland, would never have acted in private life as they did in the capacity of governor-general towards prostrate Oude.'—*Calcutta Review*, vol. III, p. 376. [W. K.] The writer was Sir Henry Lawrence, K.C.B., who succeeded General Outram as Chief Commissioner of Oudh, and was killed in the defence of the Residency, July 4th, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> The population was estimated at 5,000,000 in 1856. This was probably too low a figure, as in 1869 it was 11,500,000.

a friend at court, I solicited and obtained an audience of his majesty, more through curiosity to see what an Indian sovereign was like, than from any other motive. Since Delhi has been shorn of its splendour, and become a dilapidated burlesque of what it once was, there is no native court in India to vie with that of Oudh in wealth and magnificence. The fact of my not having been presented by the resident<sup>1</sup>—the English officer appointed by the Indian government to watch British interests in Oudh, and to keep the king in order—my not having been presented by the resident, I say, probably induced the king to look upon me with a favourable eye. I got a hint that there was an office in the king's household vacant, and that if I met his majesty, and offered the usual present, I might be accepted, and appointed to it.

No European can be taken into the king of Oudh's service without the sanction—really, the permission—of the resident. My next aim was, therefore, to obtain this sanction. I was introduced to 'the great salih'—a man whom, perhaps, you would jostle in London as if he were only an ordinary mortal, and yet who exercised a more unlimited sway over a king and court and five millions of people than any sovereign in Europe. I was introduced; a few letters passed between us; the sanction was given, and, under the conditions that I was not to meddle or intermeddle, in any way whatsoever, in the politics of Oudh—not to mix myself up in the intrigues for power between rival ministers, or in the quarrels of warring zemindars (large landed proprietors)—I was permitted to take service under His Majesty of Oudh.

These preliminaries to my appointment arranged, I was to appear before the king again—this time in private. No one must approach an eastern monarch empty-handed. A nuzza, or present, must always be offered, and is offered by every one, even at the ordinary levees, the king returning another of greater value subsequently. On the former

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Low.

occasion it was in full durbar that I had seen his majesty, seated on his throne, at the end of a long hall. I had expected to see him sitting cross-legged on a cushion. He was in a gilt or golden arm-chair, with a rich oriental dress on him certainly, and a crown, ornamented with a feather from the bird of paradise, upon his head; but still, with a much more European air about him and about the apartment, than I had expected. Then, however, I caught but a glimpse of all this; even his majesty's face I did not well see. On the present occasion, however, when I was to have a private interview, he was walking with some members of his household (Europeans) in a garden of the palace.

I remained at the end of a walk to await his arrival. My present (five gold mohurs<sup>1</sup>) rested on the open palm of my hand, a fine muslin handkerchief being thrown over the hand, between it and the pieces of gold. The palm of the left hand supported the right, on which the muslin handkerchief and the money were placed. In that attitude I awaited his majesty. It was my first lesson in court etiquette; and I could not help thinking, as I stood thus, that I looked very like a fool. My hat was resting on a seat hard by. I was uncovered, of course; and the day was sunny and hot. Before the king came round, I was in an extempore bath. At length the party approached. His majesty was dressed as an English gentleman, in a plain black suit, a London hat on his head. His face was pleasing in its expression, of a light, a very light sepia tint. His black hair, whiskers, and moustaches contrasted well with the colour of the cheeks, and set off a pair of piercing black eyes, small and keen. He was thin, and of the middle height. As he approached, he conversed in English with his attendants.<sup>2</sup> What they were talking about I forget,

<sup>1</sup> A gold mohur is equal to 16 rupees, or 32 shillings. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Captain Mundy's description 'The King is a plain, vulgar-looking man of about twenty-six years of age, his stature about five feet nine inches and his complexion rather unusually dark.'—Mundy, *Tour in India*, i. 23.

although I heard their conversation ; I was too much taken up with myself, in fact, to pay much attention to it.

The king drew near, smiled as he approached me, put his left hand under mine, touched the gold with the fingers of his right hand, and then observed—

‘ So you have decided on entering my service ? ’

‘ I have, your majesty,’ was my reply.

‘ We shall be good friends. I love the English.’

So saying, he passed, resuming his former conversation. I joined the attendants.

‘ Put your gold mohurs up at once,’ whispered my friend, ‘ or some of the natives will take them.’

They were slipped into my pocket forthwith. I took up my hat, and followed the party into the palace.

The rooms were generally large, and were ornamented with rich chandeliers and gaudily-framed pictures in great numbers. Generally speaking, there was too great a crowding of objects in each. The effect was to bewilder, rather than to please. Rich lustres and chandeliers, cabinets of rare woods, of ivory or lacquered ware, suits of armour, jewelled arms, and richly-decorated shields, were to be seen on all sides : there was too great a profusion of such things. The dining-room, the private dining-room—that used by the king when he had his intimate friends around him—was the only neat room in the palace. It was not overcrowded ; it differed from an English dining-room in no essential particular.

Once a month his majesty gave a public breakfast <sup>1</sup> to the British officers of his regiments, who came for that purpose from the cantonments, situated five miles from Lucknow, on the other side of the Goomty.<sup>2</sup> Public dinners were also occasionally given to the resident and his friends ; but all these formal parties were very irksome to the king.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Roberts in *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan* gives an account of one of these breakfasts, in which she ‘ had the good fortune to find the only vacant seat at the table next a gentleman who had provided himself with a tripod of charcoal, and other means and appliances for a comfortable breakfast ’.

<sup>2</sup> The old cantonment at Mariaon.

'Thank God!' I have heard him repeatedly say, after being released from these ceremonious parties—'thank God, they are all gone! Now let us have a glass of wine in peace. Boppery bopp,<sup>1</sup> but how stupid these things are!' And with that his majesty would yawn and stretch himself, and take off his jewelled cap and toss it to the other end of the room.

On the first evening of my arrival at the palace, the king held one of his private dinners. Five European members of his household usually attended these. One was nominally the king's tutor, employed to teach him English. The king valorously resolved over and over again to give up an hour a day to study; for he was anxious to speak English fluently. As it was, he was often obliged to cke out his sentences with a Hindustani word. I have seen his majesty sit down by the tutor, some books on the table before them.

'Now, master'—(he always called his tutor 'master')—'now, master, we will begin in earnest.'

The tutor would read a passage from the *Spectator*, or from some popular novel, and the king would read it after him. The tutor would read again—

'Boppery bopp, but this is dry work!' would his majesty exclaim, stretching himself, when it came to his turn to read once more; 'let us have a glass of wine, master.'

The glass of wine led to conversation, the books were pushed away, and so the lesson ended. Such lessons seldom occupied more than ten minutes. The tutor got about fifteen hundred pounds a year for giving them.

His tutor, then, was one of the king's friends; his librarian was another; a German painter and musician was a third; the captain of his body-guard was a fourth; and last, but by no means least, his barber—his European barber—was a fifth. Of these five I was one.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A common native exclamation, similar to 'Oh, dear me!' or something of that kind. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> See Introd., p. ix. From the time of Asafu-d-daulah the Nawabs

The barber was the greatest man of the five. His influence was far greater than that of the native prime minister, or Nawab. He was known to be an especial favourite, and all men paid court to him. His history, truly and honestly written, would form one of the oddest chapters of human life. All that I knew of him was this :

He had come out to Calcutta as cabin-boy in a ship. Having been brought up as a hair-dresser in London, he had left his ship, on arriving in Calcutta, to resume his old business. He was successful; he pushed and puffed himself into notoriety. At length he took to going up the river with European merchandise for sale; he became, in fact, what is called there a river-trader. Arrived at Lucknow, he found a resident—not the same who was there when I entered the king's service—anxious to have the ringlets of his wig restored to their pristine crispness and brilliancy; and the river-trader was not above resuming his old business. Marvellous was the alteration he made in the resident's appearance; and so the great sahib himself introduced the wonder-working barber to the king. That resident is in England now, and writes M.P. after his name.

The king had peculiarly lank, straight hair; not the most innocent approach to a curl had ever been seen on it. The barber wrought wonders again, and the king was delighted. Honours and wealth were showered upon the lucky *coiffeur*. He was given a title of nobility. *Sofraz Khan* ('the illustrious Chief') was his new name, and men bowed to him in Oudh. The whilom cabin-boy was a man of power now, and wealth was rapidly flowing in upon him. The king's favourite soon becomes wealthy in a native state. The barber, however, had other sources of profit open to him besides bribery: he supplied all the wine and

of Oudh had been in the habit of keeping a court artist—among these were Zoffani, who painted 'Col. Mordaunt's Cock Fight'; Place and Home, artists to Sa'adat Ali and Ghaziu-d-din, the latter of whom painted Bishop Heber's portrait; Beachy, Cassanova, and Mantz in the time of Nasiru-d-din.

beer used at the king's table. Every European article required at court came through his hands, and the rupees accumulated in thousands. 'What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' is a question as apt now in every oriental court as it was when Esther, the Jewish queen, recorded it.

Nussir put no bounds to the honours he heaped upon the fascinating barber; unlimited confidence was placed in him. By small degrees he had at last become a regular guest at the royal table, and sat down to take dinner with the king as a thing of right; nor would his majesty taste a bottle of wine opened by any other hands than the barber's. So afraid was his majesty of being poisoned by his own family, that every bottle of wine was sealed in the barber's house before being brought to the king's table; and before he opened it, the little man looked carefully at the seal to see that it was all right.<sup>1</sup> He then opened it, and took a portion of a glass first, before filling one for the king. Such was the etiquette at the royal table when I first took my place at it.

The confidence reposed in the favourite was, of course, soon generally known over India, or at all events in Bengal. The 'low menial', as the *Calcutta Review* called him,<sup>2</sup> was the subject of squibs, and pasquinades, and attacks, and satirical verses without number; and marvellously little did the low menial care what they said of him, as long as he accumulated rupees. They had the wit and the satire, and he had the money; so far, he was content.

<sup>1</sup> The king lived in constant dread of poison. The following letter, which appeared in the *Calcutta Daily News*, is quoted by Captain White in *Mirzas Khyas-Jah*.

'A gentleman who left Lucknow about a month before the king's death, and who lived in his family, told me he had not the smallest doubt his Majesty would die by poison soon after he left him, and he expected to hear of his death every day. All the king's food he himself (the gentleman in question) purchased by his Majesty's order in the Bazar—saw every article dressed, and carried to table before him. He often went with the king in disguise at night, to draw water from the public wells for his Majesty's use.'

<sup>2</sup> Art. *Kingdom of Oudh*, vol. iii. [W. K.]

Of the newspapers, the most incessant in its attacks on the barber was the *Agra Uckbar*, a paper since defunct. Shortly before I left Lucknow, the barber employed a European clerk in the resident's office to answer the attacks of the *Uckbar* in one of the Calcutta papers with which he corresponded ; and for this service the clerk was paid 100 Rs. (£10) a month. So that, if the barber had not his own poet, like the tailors in London, he had, at all events, his Own Correspondent, like the *Times*.

On my introduction to the private dining-table of royalty, it may be easily supposed, therefore, that the two persons whom I was most anxious to see and to become acquainted with were the king and the barber ; but I have delayed so long upon the threshold, that I must throw the dinner into another chapter.



## CHAPTER II

### THE AMUSEMENTS OF A KING

The private dinner—Etiquette—Female attendants—The barber's office—After dinner—Nautches—The puppet-show—Royal wit—The gauze curtain—The lake pavilion—Games with royalty—An illustration from Europe—Slippers *versus* turbans—Leap-frog—Snowballing.

WE awaited the king in an ante-room ; and a little before nine o'clock, the usual dinner-hour in the palace, he made his appearance, leaning on the arm of his favourite, the barber. Of the two the king was much the taller, the favourite incomparably the more muscular and healthy-looking. One of those little men indeed was his favourite, who made up in breadth what they want in height. His Majesty was dressed, as he had been in the garden, in a plain black English suit, a dress-coat having replaced the frock he wore on the former occasion. An ordinary black silk neck-tie, and patent leather boots, completed his costume. He was a gentlemanly-looking man, not without a certain kingly grace—his air and figure a complete contrast to that of his companion, on whom nature had indelibly stamped the characteristics of vulgarity. Both were dressed similarly ; and the contrast they presented was made all the more striking by the outward habiliments in which they resembled each other.

The scene in the dining-room, as we took our places at the table, was a strange one—a strange mixture of occidental comforts and oriental display. The king was seated in a gilt arm-chair, raised a few inches above the level of the floor. He occupied the middle of one side of the table, and we sat on either hand. The opposite side of the table was left unoccupied, partly for the convenience of the servants when removing and placing dishes on the table, but chiefly that his majesty might see without difficulty

whatever entertainments there were for the evening's amusement.

We had no sooner taken our seats, than half a dozen female attendants, richly dressed and distinguished for their beauty, came from behind a gauze curtain or screen that occupied one end of the room. I was warned not to gaze upon these ladies too curiously, as they were supposed to be kept from the eyes of man, like other ladies of the harem; supposed so only, however. During the evening I found many opportunities of regarding them without subjecting myself to observation, or without appearing to take any notice of them.

They were all young and handsome. Their colour was of the brunette tint of an Andalusian belle, not darker; and their jet-black hair, taken back from the forehead, and twisted in rolls behind, ornamented with pearls and silver pins, formed a pleasing contrast with the delicate tint of their skin, and the flush of excitement which tinged their cheeks. An outer covering of thin semi-transparent cloth, richly embroidered, was thrown over the form, and partially rested upon the back of the head. The outlines of the shoulders were quite distinct through the thin envelopes in which they were enrobed, all more or less transparent. The heaving of the chest, as they gently waved fans, made of the peacock's feathers, backwards and forwards over the king, was striking and beautiful. The lower portion of the person was hidden in wide *pyjamas*, or Turkish-trousers, made of satin, of a bright crimson or purple colour. These *pyjamas* fitted closely to the waist, and gradually became looser and more voluminous as they descended. They were collected above the ankle with gold-embroidered belts, corresponding to those dimly seen though the gauze cloak at the waist.

They took their stations noiselessly behind the king's chair. He made no remark. No one seemed to regard them at all. It was the ordinary routine of the dinner-table; nothing more. Their arms were bare nearly to the shoulder; and as they waved their feathery fans gently

about, two at a time, gracefully drawing them in succession above and about the king's chair, it was a sight worth seeing. If the females of India excel in any species of physical beauty, it is particularly in the fine mould of the limbs. A statuary might have taken some of those delicately-shaped arms and hands as models for his Venus. There they plied their graceful task silently and monotonously the whole evening, fanning, and attending to the king's hookah by turns, relieving each other in regular succession, until his majesty left the table, or (as was more generally the case) was assisted from the table into his harem.

The dinner was altogether European in other respects. There was little to distinguish it from a fine dinner in a fine Calcutta house. The native servants came and went according to their wont—careful, attentive, silent; we chatted and listened to the king. Soup, fish, joints, curry and rice, pastry and dessert, succeeded each other in the ordinary routine. The cookery was excellent; for a Frenchman presided in the royal kitchen—a cook that had formerly been *chef-de-cuisine* in the Bengal Club in Calcutta. But neither the French cook nor the European coachman were allowed any liberty out of their respective stations; whilst the English barber was all in all. Such are the caprices of power!

Mussulman though he was, Nussir stinted himself not in wine; nor, indeed, did the native nobility of Oudh generally. I have heard his majesty declare more than once, that the Koran did not forbid the use of wine, as the vulgar supposed, but only the abuse of it. Other men were allowed the use, but a king might also be allowed the abuse—such, I fancy, was his majesty's doctrine; for he seldom left the dining-table altogether sober. The wines most usually set before us were claret, madeira, and champagne, all of excellent quality, and rendered delicious, amid the excessive heats of a large portion of the year, by being iced previously.

The dinner proceeded; and the wine was gradually rendering the king and his courtiers more free and easy.

'I have always loved Europeans,' said his majesty aloud, and addressing us generally; 'I have always loved Europeans, and the natives hate me. My family would poison me if they could; but they fear me too. Wallah, but how they fear me!'

'Your majesty has made them fear you,' said the barber.

'I have; it is quite true,' was the king's reply. Then turning to us on his left, he asked:

'You often see the people of Lucknow fighting with each other, don't you?'

'Too often, your majesty,' was the reply.

'And killing each other!'

'Often killing each other.'

'Ah, ha! so they do; but they never touch you, do they?'

'Never, your majesty.'

'No; the wretches know too well that I would exterminate them if they did, I would. They know I love the Europeans, and they are wary.'

The dessert came; the richest and most luscious fruits that tropical luxuriance produces were placed upon the table; and with the dessert the evening's amusements began. These amusements, I afterwards found, were very varied. Sometimes tumblers would exhibit their 'calisthenic feats,' as they would be called in a London play-bill—men who appeared to have no bones in their bodies, but could tie themselves up in knots, walk any way but that in which Nature intended, outdo the monkey in monkey-like tricks, and go away well pleased if people laughed at them. Sometimes the court jesters had a keen encounter of wits, accompanied with arrant buffoonery, not unlike the performances of harlequin and pantaloon and clown in our pantomimes. Sometimes conjurers exhibited their feats of *diablerie* and snake-charming. Sometimes we had cock-fighting—fights between quails or partridges on the table before his majesty. Sometimes a puppet-show was introduced, and the marionettes acted and danced spasmodically,

like human beings in modern tragedies. With these there was generally a group of dancing-girls and attendant musicians performing somewhere in the room.

On my first appearance at the royal table, the amusements for the evening were a puppet-show and the usual nautch girls. His majesty laughed heartily at the performances of the little burlesques of men and women; laughed heartily, and enjoyed himself. The barber saw that his majesty was pleased, and condescended to express his approbation also of the show. The nautch-girls exhibited their fine figures in graceful attitudes, advancing and retiring, now with one hand held over the head, now with the other. Their faces were not so captivating as those of the female attendants behind his majesty; but their forms were perfectly moulded, and they managed their limbs with a graceful dexterity not to be surpassed. Voluptuous is, perhaps, the title that most correctly indicates the entire character of their performance. Attendant musicians played upon a species of lute and tamborine behind them, advancing and retreating with them, and accompanying the instruments with their voices. The instrumental seemed the principal part of the musical performance; the voice accompanied it, rather than it the voice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following extract from *The History of Hyder-Shah*, published by his grandson, Prince Gholam Mohammed, when in England, in 1855 (although originally compiled during Hyder's life-time), will show that such entertainments are usual in Indian courts.

'There is, for the most part, a comedy every night, that commences about eight in the evening, and lasts till eleven. It is intermixed with dances and songs. At the present time (perhaps about 1780), the court of Hyder is the most brilliant in India; and his company of performers is without contradiction the first, as well on account of its riches, as because the Bayaderes are the women to whom he gives the preference. Being sovereign of part of Begapore, he has every facility of procuring, amongst this class of women, those who are most remarkable for their beauty and talents.

The comedians are all women. A directress, who is likewise manager, purchases young girls at the age of four or five years, who are chosen on account of their beauty. She causes them to be

But nothing of all this graceful attitudinizing and profuse exhibition of fine forms was attended to by the king or his party. The nautch-girls danced, and their attendants played and sang; but no man regarded them, unless it was myself. The king was taken up with the puppet-show, and every one looked at it and praised it.

At length his majesty gave a whispered order to the barber, who went out, brought something in his hand, and gave it to the king. The regal chair was pushed back, and his majesty condescended to advance to the front of the puppet-show, going round the table as if to inspect it more closely. The owners exerted themselves to give still more satisfaction, regarding their fortunes as made. The king watched for a little; his hand was advanced suddenly, and as suddenly drawn back, and one of the innocent marionettes fell motionless upon the stage. It was quite plain that his majesty had a pair of scissors in his hand, and had cut the string. The performers must have been as well aware of this as we were, but they gazed in affected wonder at the catastrophe. Natives of India require no

inoculated, and then provides them with masters both for dancing and music. They are taught every accomplishment that can inspire the prince and his court with the love of pleasure. They begin to appear in public at the age of about ten or eleven years. They have generally the most delicate features, large black eyes, beautiful eye-brows, small mouth, and the finest teeth. Their cheeks are dimpled, and their black hair hangs in flowing tresses to the ground. Their complexion is a clear and light brown, not such as that of the mulatto women, who are incapable of blushing. Their habit is always a fine gauze, very richly embroidered with gold, and they are covered with jewels. No Bayadere of the prince's company is more than seventeen years old. At that age they are dismissed, and either travel over the province or attach themselves to the Pagodas. Just when (in Europe) they would be attaining perfection of bodily mould and scientific instruction, 'they are dismissed!' A sad lot truly, to purchase a lifetime of sorrow and neglect by six or seven years of puppetdom. And yet there are people in England who tell us, in the blindest tones of mock sentimentality, that such details ought not to be given—that the people of England ought not to be informed how the Indian princes, whom they uphold, spend their time! [W. K.]

training in simulation or dissimulation. The king turned round, his face beaming with fun, and looked at us knowingly, as much as to say, 'Did I not do that well?' The barber laughed loudly in reply, and other courtiers joined in the chorus.

But this was not the whole of the royal wit. The hand was pushed forward and drawn back again and again; and again and again did one after the other of the puppets fall dead and immovable upon the stage, every successive fall eliciting a shout of laughter from the table, and a blank look of astonishment from the general manager of the show, who was visible directing and superintending. When nearly all had fallen, the royal wit was concluded by taking a candle and setting fire to the show. It was not without difficulty that the flames were extinguished.

During the rest of the evening the dancers and singers were criticized with more freedom than delicacy, the wine circulating freely, and his majesty indulging in it to a far greater extent than prudence would warrant.

It will not be supposed that during all this time I kept my eyes altogether away from the gauze curtain drawn across one end of the apartment. I had been told previously that some favourites of the harem were allowed by his majesty to witness the dinner-parties from behind that screen, and that it would be rude to be observed gazing intently at it. I found many opportunities, however, of inspecting it without violating etiquette. It was thick enough to prevent our recognizing faces or figures behind, although we could see faintly the outline of shadowy masses of drapery passing to and fro. One principal figure was seated on a cushion—the reigning favourite doubtless; and her jewelled arms and neck glared brilliantly ever and anon as the light flashed upon them. We heard, too, a sweet feminine laugh, as the puppets were cut down, issuing from behind the screen; for although we could not see distinctly through it, on account of our distance from it, those on the other side no doubt could.

The revel proceeded; songs were sung. His majesty

became gradually more and more affected with the wine he had taken, until his consciousness was almost gone ; and he was then assisted by the female attendants and two sturdy eunuchs behind the curtain, and so off into the harem. It was astonishing how like a drunken king looked to ordinary drunken unanointed man.

The next day I had an opportunity of inspecting that part of the palace open to my observation more fully than I had yet done. The same characteristics pervaded every portion of the interior—too great a display of gilding and glass ; all was gaudy and glittering, not beautiful. One portion, however, struck me as being singularly picturesque. It was a lake, a small artificial lake, that occupied almost the whole of the garden ;<sup>1</sup> and in the centre of it, entirely unconnected with the shores on any side, rose a neat pavilion, brilliantly painted externally, but of a picturesque form, with its pointed minarets and miniature domes. The water in the lake was perfectly clear and transparent, and numbers of large gold and silver fish darted about in it with wonderful rapidity—not the tiny fish we see paraded in glass globes or small reservoirs in England, but good sturdy fellows, of the most brilliant colours, and many of them a foot or a foot-and-a-half long.

The pavilion in the centre of this sheet of water was reached by a boat, which was moored opposite the side of the palace whence we had issued. My companion and friend (like myself a courtier, but high in the king's esteem) seated himself forthwith in the boat, and invited me to follow. The boatmen made their appearance at once, and we were taken across to the fairy-like house.

It was certainly the most elegant structure in Lucknow. It contained but two apartments of moderate size, both luxuriously fitted up, with divans running round the walls. In the centre of the larger apartments, on the table, stood a perfect model of the entire palace, wrought with all that elaborate minuteness of detail and perfection of colouring

<sup>1</sup> This lake lay between the buildings known as the Great and Small Chatter Mauzil.



so characteristic of the Indian artists. The pavilion in which we stood was represented in this piece of carving by a miniature model not larger than a walnut, and yet containing every spire, every little external ornament, and even the two rooms within.

Looking out upon the water from this little island palace was enough to make you fancy you had got into fairy-land. The brilliant fish playing about incessantly, the richly decorated boat, the flowers that bordered the lake, lost in bushes which almost hid the surrounding buildings, were all features so novel and so captivating, that I thought, were I the king, I should almost desert the palace for the pavilion. His majesty seldom visited it however; and already marks of neglect were beginning to appear around and about it. At one time, as the attendants told me, he was fond of bringing some favourite of the harem over, the eunuchs rowing the boat; but of late years the pavilion seemed quite forgotten, and was consequently becoming neglected.

Not long after, the conversation at the dinner-table having accidentally turned upon the variegated fish, some one wondered how they would taste, or whether they were fit for food. The king maintained they were, and decided upon having some of them cooked. The following day they were placed upon the table, and we partook of them. The flavour was not very agreeable; but even had it been delicious, they were so full of minute bones as to render it almost impossible to eat them. They were a thousand times worse in this respect than the *hilsa*, a fish noted in India for its numerous bones.

My lessons in court etiquette came thick and fast upon each other. It was at a public breakfast—that is, one of the formal breakfasts given by his majesty to the resident, his aides-de-camp, and some of the officers from the cantonments—that the king turned suddenly round, at the conclusion of the entertainment, to a surgeon in the Company's service—let us call him Jones—

‘Jones,’ said he, ‘will you play me a game of draughts?’

The king hated Jones, who was one of his own aides-de-camp, and loved to disconcert him.

'With great pleasure; I shall be honoured in playing with your majesty,' was Jones's reply.

'For a hundred gold mohurs,' said the king.<sup>1</sup>

'I cannot afford to play for a hundred gold mohurs, your majesty; I am but a poor man.'

'Master,' said the king, turning quickly round to the tutor, 'will *you* play me at draughts for a hundred gold mohurs?'

'Your majesty honours me; I shall be delighted,' replied the tutor, who, from being more intimate with the king, was better acquainted with his whims and eccentricities.

The board was brought—the men were placed—the game was commenced. I happened to be near, and watched it as it proceeded. Having played chess with the tutor previously, I felt convinced he must be an excellent draughts-player; but I soon found that though the king was playing badly, the tutor was playing far worse. It was a lesson in court etiquette. The king, I found, *must not be beaten*. Nay, badly as the tutor played, admirably pretending to be doing his best, I saw that it was with difficulty he contrived to let his majesty win; and I subsequently heard, that it was no uncommon thing for a friend to engage the king's opponent in conversation, whilst his majesty slyly altered the position of some of the pieces!

The game was finished. The tutor was beaten.

'You owe me a hundred gold mohurs,' said triumphant majesty.

'I do, your majesty; I shall bring them this evening.'

'Don't forget,' was majesty's reply, as he walked off to the harem.

That evening, when we assembled for dinner—a private dinner of the king and the favoured five—the first remark his majesty made was addressed to the tutor:

<sup>1</sup> Equal to £100. A gold mohur was worth 16 rupees or 32 shillings, as I have before remarked. [W. K.]

'Well, master, have you brought the gold mohurs?'

'I have, your majesty; they are below in my palanquin. Shall I bring them here?'

'Nonsense, master. Keep them. Send them home again. Do you think I want your money? Jones thought I wanted his. Did you see how the pig ate?'<sup>1</sup> Wallah, but I hate him!

But was there no one to tell Jones, you ask perhaps, kind reader, of the king's ways? He who advised him to accept the next challenge he received, might be the means of making him lose £100; for the king was so capricious, that his actions and conduct were not to be relied upon. Every member of the household, however, felt convinced that if money were taken from him, double its value would be returned as a present, either by the king or the prime minister, although the result might have been very different in the case of a man whom the king disliked.

There was little difficulty, comparatively speaking, in allowing the king to win the games of chess or draughts. He played at both, played badly, and always won. It was the etiquette not to beat majesty in anything. He frequently played with me; and I profited by the lesson I had received silently when witnessing his game with the tutor.

But when it came to billiards, allowing his majesty invariably to win, was no such easy matter. It was then necessary to have a friend by to touch the balls slyly occasionally, always in favour of the king and against his adversary—now to keep one ball from the pocket, and to send an erring one into it. This must not be done too openly. It required considerable adroitness and skill; but as long as the player played his part well, the king was content; that is, as long as he appeared unconscious of the frauds and annoyed at the results. It was then a joke; and his majesty laughed and was content.

All this may appear very childish and contemptible on the king's part, and I am not about to assert that it was

<sup>1</sup> The pig being an unclean animal amongst the Moslems, the epithet 'pig' is the most abusive they can use. [W. K.]

otherwise ; but if my readers therefore think that it was confined to the Lucknow palace—that similar scenes do not take place in other palaces, and in more highly civilized countries than Oudh—they are mistaken. The courtier who would defeat his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, at draughts, or chess, or billiards, must be a bold man ; and although that emperor may be no child nor fool, yet depend upon it that some method is always found by which he may come off victorious. But this is only hypothetical ; take an instance of kingly hunting, from real life, in Europe ; and then say, is it not truly as absurd as our humbugging of his swarthy majesty of Oudh, 'Nussir-u-deen Hyder, the asylum and refuge of the universe' ?

On St. Hubert's day, November 3, it is the custom of the Court of Berlin to have a boar-hunt at Grünewald. His majesty the king of Prussia appears on the field in a rich suit of strongly-contrasted colours—a black velvet surcoat, with white kerseymere pantaloons. The rest of the field are in the usual scarlet and leather of our English meetings. A boar, duly prepared—that is, *with clipped tusks*—lest any harm should be done—is 'started'. An immense field follows—king, dogs, attendants—a motley group, containing very various specimens of human and equine and canine nature. At an easy canter away goes majesty, and at an easy canter follow the scarlet coats and the leathern continuations, the dogs doing the duty of the day in front. The boar is caught by the dogs, pulled down, incapable of resistance. Some members of the hunt leap from their saddles, and secure the dreadful wild beast, neck uppermost, the dogs being beaten and called off. His majesty draws near ; a very elegant *couteau de chasse* is put into his hand ; he dismounts, and advances to the boar. The *couteau de chasse* is drawn across the neck of the wild beast ; loud shouts applaud his majesty for his courage, skill, and determination ; and, full of his blushing honours, he canters back to the palace.

Royal life in the palace of Lucknow, and in some of the

courts of continental Europe, is not so different after all, you see.

The favour and intimacy which the European members of the household enjoyed were by no means pleasing to the higher native nobility of Oudh—nay, were altogether displeasing. This was natural enough; for the nawab, or prime minister, and the commander of the forces, and 'the general' at the head of the police, Rajah Buktawir Singh by name, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter, were all secondary beings when the barber was by.

'It is not right or proper for these gentlemen,' urged the nawab, 'to enter into the presence with their shoes and boots on. We never do. Your majesty is somewhat over-condescending, in allowing it. Believe me, your majesty's august father, of happy memory, Ghazi-u-deen Hyder, the great and magnificent, would never have suffered it.'

The king was taken aback for a moment at this bold speech from one usually so humble and so pliant; but Rooshun-u-Dowlah<sup>1</sup> had screwed his courage to the speaking-point, and was not to be answered with a look.

'Am I a greater man than the King of England, nawab?' asked his majesty.

'Your majesty is the greatest king in India—greater than the Emperor of Delhi. May the asylum of the world live a thousand years!' Such was the wily courtier's evasive answer.

'Rooshun-u-Dowlah,' said the king, 'am I a greater man than the King of England?'

'It is not for your majesty's servant to say that any one is greater than his lord.'

'Listen to me, nawab; and you, general, listen to me. The King of England is my master; and these gentlemen would go into his presence with their shoes on. Shall they

<sup>1</sup> Rooshun-ul-daulah was appointed minister in August 1832, after Hakim Mehdi's dismissal; he held that office until October 1837. He was one of the principal members of the old aristocracy of Lucknow, and connected remotely with the royal family. v. *Introd.*, p. xxvi.

not come into mine, then? Do they come before me with their hats on? Answer me, your excellency.'

'They do not, your majesty.'

'No; that is *their* way of showing respect. *They* take off their hats, and *you* take off your shoes. But, come now, let us have a bargain. Wallah, but I will get them to take off their shoes and leave them without, as you do, if you will take off your turban and leave it without, as they do.'

The nawab never said a word more on the subject. He was silenced. The loss of the turban is the greatest of indignities amongst Mussulmans. 'May my father's head be uncovered, if I do!' is no uncommon asseveration with them when urged to perform what they will not, or when anxious to show that the commission of an action is far from their thoughts.

The above conversation, which surprised us all so much that the king got his secretary to make a note of it—for everything done at court is chronicled—will show that the king was no fool when he allowed his judgement and his reason to guide him. It was only when governed by foolish whim or drunken caprice that he was childish and absurd—his draughts-playing and billiard-playing notwithstanding.

I have exhibited him now under several different aspects; and in the following pages he will play many more parts, good and bad. Before I conclude this chapter, however, I must give the reader a peep at two other royal sports—leap-frog and snowballing.

We were in a large walled-in garden at Chaungunge,<sup>1</sup> one of the park palaces where animal fights often took place. The garden might have been some three or four acres in extent, and was surrounded with a high wall. No native attendant was admitted into it when we were there with the king. Some one had been describing the game of leap-frog to his majesty, or else he had seen some

<sup>1</sup> Chandganj, a park that was situated on either side of the road to Kursi, between Aliganj and the Gumti.

pictures of it, and it had taken his fancy mightily. The natives had been left, as usual, without the garden, the heavy gates were swung to, and majesty commanded that we should forthwith begin. The captain of the body-guard 'made a back' for the tutor, the librarian stood for the portrait-painter. Away we went, like schoolboys, beginning with very 'low backs', for none of us was very expert in the game, but gradually 'making backs' higher and higher. Tutor, barber, captain, librarian, portrait-painter—off we went like overgrown schoolboys, now up, now down. It was hot work, I assure you.

The king, however, did not long stand a quiet spectator of the scene; he would try too. His majesty was very thin, and not over strong. I happened to be nearest him at the time; and he ran towards me, calling out. I 'made a back' for him, and he went over easily enough. He was very light, and a good horseman, so that he succeeded in the vault: he then stood for me. I would have given a good deal to have been excused; but he would not have it so, and to have refused would have been mortally to have offended him.

I ran, vaulted, down went the back, down I went with it; and his majesty the king and the author of these reminiscences went rolling together amongst the flower-beds. He got up annoyed—

'Boppery bopp, but you are as heavy as an elephant!' he exclaimed.

I was afraid he would have been in a passion; but he was not. The barber adroitly made a back for him forthwith, and over he went blithely. The lightest of our party was not far off, and the king made a back for him, and succeeded in getting him safely over. It was then all right. Away they went, vaulting and standing, round and round, until majesty was tired out, and wanted iced claret to cool him. The game was frequently renewed afterwards.

But the snowballing? asks some impatient reader. Well, I am coming to it.

It was about Christmas time. Christmas is called in

India the great day of the sahibs ; and we were conversing about it in this very garden of Chaungunge, where the leap-frog had been first tried.

Christmas sports led to a description of what winter was ; winter led to snow ; snow to snowballing. We described to his majesty the art and pastime of snowballing as well as we could. To a man who had never seen snow, it was not very easy to describe it vividly.

The garden abounded with a large yellow flower, the African marigold, the smaller varieties of which are used to ornament houses in Calcutta, at Christmas-time. It was not quite so large as a dahlia, but somewhat similar in form and appearance. When snowballing had been described to the king as well as we could describe it, he pulled three or four of these yellow flowers, and threw them at the librarian, who happened to be the most distant of the party. Like good courtiers, all followed the royal example ; and soon every one was pelting right and left. These yellow flowers were our snowballs, and we all entered into the game with hearty good-will. The king bore his share in the combat right royally, discharging three missiles for one that was aimed at him. He laughed and enjoyed the sport amazingly. Before we had concluded, we were all a mass of yellow leaves : they stuck about in our hair and clothes, and on the king's hat, in a tenacious way. What the gardeners must have thought of the matter, when they came to set the garden to rights again, we did not stop to conjecture. It was enough that the king was amused. He had found out a new pleasure, and enjoyed it as long as those yellow flowers continued in bloom.



## CHAPTER III

### THE HUNTING PARTY

A practical joke—The deserted palace—The encampment—The wild fowl—Royal shooting—The trained hawks—March forward—Hawking—Trained stags—The choostah—The chase.

THE conversation having once turned at the king's table upon hunting and shooting, some one remarked that there was excellent sport to be obtained at a *jheel* or small lake only a few miles from Lucknow. The king was in a good and pleasant humour at the time, and remarked—

'I have heard of that *jheel*; let us go there and have some shooting. I want to see if I have any real sportsmen about me.' Orders were given forthwith; and it was determined that we should meet at one of the palaces in the immediate neighbourhood of the sheet of water on the following day.

This palace, *Dil-kushar* (heart's-delight)<sup>1</sup> by name, was only a few miles from the walls of the town;<sup>2</sup> so that in making our way thither, we expected, of course, to return as usual in the evening, and therefore made no arrangements for passing the night there. When we arrived, the king and his native retinue were already at *Dil-kushar*. We expected the summons to attend his majesty to the *jheel*; but no such summons came. Wondering at the

<sup>1</sup> The palace *Dilkusha* built by S'adat 'Ali Khān was a favourite rendezvous of the kings of Oudh. It was surrounded by a small but thickly wooded park stocked with game.—Hastings, *Private Journal*, i. 196.

<sup>2</sup> The following curious passage is from the *Farhanghi Refa'at*, a Persian educational work published in Lucknow, in Ghazi-u-deen's time. 'If the prophet Enoch had seen the royal gardens in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, he would have never wished to go to Paradise, but would, without doubt, have said, "These are better."' Such is Oriental flattery! [W. K.]

delay, we found the day gradually wearing away, and evening approaching ; we amusing ourselves with billiards in the meantime.

At the usual hour in the evening, about nine o'clock, we were summoned to dinner ; and found his majesty, according to his wont, ready to do his part at the table in the eating and drinking line, particularly in the latter. No one liked to ask him why nothing had been said about the shooting, and he did not refer to the subject ; so that, with the usual amount of toast-giving and drinking, and the usual dancing and singing, the night wore away.

It might have been about midnight. The king was gradually becoming affected by the quantity of wine he had taken. We were looking forward to his being assisted into the harem, and to our release, when he suddenly burst out laughing. There was no apparent cause for the laughter, and so we waited till he explained himself.

'It won't do to leave me here alone,' said he at length ; 'this is a stupid place. You are married, and you'—(nodding to the barber and another member of our party)—'you may go home, of course. I don't want to deprive your wives of your society for the night ; but the rest must remain in attendance.'

When we attended his majesty to any distance from Lucknow, we always took our beds with us—travelling-beds such as are ordinarily used in India—and with them our servants, our wardrobes, and dressing paraphernalia. Where a clean suit of clothes, from the stockings to the jacket, is required every day, a man cannot travel with a single carpet-bag in his hand.

It was evidently a pleasantry of his majesty, and we enjoyed it as best we could.

'However,' said he again, 'we must have the shooting to-morrow.'

As soon as the king retired, which was not long after, our friends departed ; and one of them promised to call at my house and order down my palanquin, in which I intended to pass the night, as I had done some fifty times before ;

he was also to send down my clothes for the ensuing day, and my native valet, or *bearer*, as he is called.

The king went off into the harem, laughing heartily as he went at the practical joke he was playing. We laughed too, as courtiers were bound to do.

'You can keep the nautch-girls to amuse you,' said he. 'Go on dancing; sing away for the sahibs,' he continued gaily, as he passed by them.

It was a strange scene; our friends gone, and the brilliantly-lighted hall—with its massive wax-candles on the table and its chandeliers and wall-shades—almost empty. The female attendants on the king, together with the servants, had disappeared: the nautch-girls still danced and sang; but when we thought the king was out of hearing, we dismissed them too; and there we sat, satiated with wine, longing only for retirement and rest. There was no great hardship, unquestionably, in being condemned to sit at a well-stocked table a little later than usual, with all kinds of fruits and the best wines procurable at our bidding—no great hardship unquestionably. Yet it was with an undefined uneasy sensation we glanced round the deserted apartment, which was about fifty feet long. We hardly spoke above our breath; as to drinking, we had too keen a remembrance of previous morning headaches to indulge much more.

At length we rose from the table, and wandered about the house. It was all open to us except the sleeping-apartments, before which, as usual, the native female sepoys, with muskets at their shoulders, paced noiselessly. All was silent and deserted-looking; a native servant here and there, with his clothes wrapped round him, head, feet, and all bandaged up as it were, lay on a mat asleep, not to be awoken by ten times as much noise as we made.

It was now about two o'clock, and our servants had not yet arrived; so taking possession, one of a couch and another of an easy-chair, we resigned ourselves to the mosquitoes and to sleep. The large wax-candles burned on the table near; and the only sound to be heard was

the snoring of some lusty sleeper, the monotonous pacing of the sentinels, and the servants in the dining-room extinguishing the lamps.

I had hardly composed myself to sleep, however, when my palanquin was borne into a room adjoining—a small empty room, which would not be defiled by our occupying it. My companions were soon similarly provided, our servants making us comfortable enough; and in a few minutes we forgot the king's pleasantry and our position in a sound sleep.

The next day passed as the preceding. A servant told us occasionally that the king had inquired for us—a hint that we were not to leave. The barber was in attendance to dress his hair as usual about twelve o'clock. We amused ourselves in the palace as best we could, now pacing up and down the verandahs with a cigar, now playing a game of billiards, and anon inspecting some article of oriental *virtù* that ornamented some of the rooms. It was evident the king was determined we should not leave; but not a word was said of the shooting, no preparation whatever was made for departing to the lake where we had been assured the wild-fowl congregated in thousands.

Dinner passed as before, the king again remarking that he could not be left alone in such a dull place, and that the following day we must go off to the lake. We slept as before in our palanquins, sending off our *bearers* to provide clothes for the following day. Suspecting, however, that the king intended remaining some time, either at the palace in which we then were, or at an encampment that had been prepared near the lake, I ordered down at once my bed, and usual travelling companions in the way of boxes and stores. I would be prepared for all contingencies, at all events. A little inquiry amongst the native attendants had elicited the fact that the king was very much pleased with some new addition to his harem, some fascinating little beauty of tender years whom we had first seen on reaching Dil-kushar a day or two previously. It was a new toy, to be played with for a few days and then

discarded ; just as younger children amuse themselves with a rattle to-day, and with a jack-in-the-box to-morrow.

I was fully prepared therefore for the week's attendance required of us at this out-of-the-way place. At the end of that time we set forward to the lake. The king had made it a personal request, that we should not visit it until we all travelled together. We were surprised and delighted, on first obtaining a sight of the lake, with the extent of the preparations made for our party. The ground sloped upwards from the water's edge on the side whence we approached, so that we caught no glimpse of it until we had crested the little hill on the side of which we were travelling.

The lake was spread out before us, shining in the red lurid light of the setting sun. It might have been two miles long by one in breadth. Thick forest grew on all sides of it, except on that by which we drew near—thick forest down to the very water's edge, in many places overhanging the water gracefully. On the side whence we approached, a grassy bank opened round a little bay, sloping upwards gradually to the summit on which we stood. Round this miniature bay stretched the encampment, the king's tent in the centre—a highly decorated marquee, conspicuous from the crimson lines which ornamented it, and the triangular green flags. The tents for the ladies of the king's household and suite—his wives and their attendants, the female sepoys and bearers, the dancing and singing girls, and servants—were situated behind the marquee. The resident<sup>1</sup> was to honour the expedition with his presence, and a handsomely-decorated tent had been prepared for him on the right of the king's. On the other side, at some distance, a square tent was pitched for us, the European members of the household. These were not all, however ; there were tents also for the nawab,<sup>2</sup> or native prime minister, for his son the commander-in-chief, for the general at the head of the police,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Low.

<sup>2</sup> Roshanu-d-daulah (Introd., p. xxvi).

<sup>3</sup> Raja Bakhtawar Singh.

and other officers, many of them with numerous attendants. Amongst all this little canvas town were elephants picqueted about, horses and camels; howdahs here and palanquins there, together with all the variety of conveyances used by the superior native females.

The king had been determined to surprise us; and he succeeded. He was delighted at the admiration which we expressed; honest admiration it was too, for a more brilliant or a finer scene it would not be easy to imagine. We did not ask him, of course, what was the use of it all. We did not remark that the lake was within easy visiting distance of Lucknow, and that it might easily have been journeyed to in the morning, our sport continued during the day, and we ourselves sleep, or, if need were, dine, each in his own house, in Lucknow the same evening. These were considerations not for us to bring forward. We admired the lake, and the beautiful scenery round it—we admired the encampment and its varied oriental aspect—and we expressed our admiration. He was content, and we anticipated enjoyment.

We soon found, however, that sporting with a king in company was a different thing from sporting with ordinary unanointed men. He was to have all the sport to himself, and for several days he had it all to himself. A screen was put up on the shore in front of the little bay I have already mentioned. The object of the screen was to prevent the king from being seen by the wild fowl when he fired on them. They were enticed in great numbers to the waters of the little bay by parched corn and rice scattered plentifully on its surface. When they had collected in hundreds, if not in thousands, on the surface of the water, the encampment being kept as still as possible, the king was informed all was ready. He came down to the screen noiselessly, an attendant carrying his Joe Manton. A hole had been properly prepared, in which the king inserted the end of Joe's muzzle. The birds swam about and picked up the corn, fighting and screaming and fluttering here and there intent on their occupation—not for a moment thinking of

majesty and Manton. Blaze went the gun: the king himself had fired—a feat for accomplishing which he regarded himself as no little of a sportsman. The shot pattered in like hail amongst the birds, a good deal going harmlessly over them; for his majesty was nothing of a marksman. With loud cries the birds rose forthwith into the air, first to gyrate in clouds in a confused way overhead, and then to disappear in the forests. The attendants rushed into the water to secure the wounded and the dead. They brought out double as many as the king had injured, and made a little pile of them before the delighted 'refuge of the world'. Double as many! you exclaim, good reader—double as many as the king had injured! Yes, double as many at least; for, had the king not hit one, they would have brought out a goodly supply, which, of course, they also took in with them. It was the interest of all to keep his majesty in good humour; so the attendants were provided with birds recently brought in from the adjoining district. When they were in the water, standing up to their arm-pits in it, it was easy to untie the birds they had concealed about their persons; and who was to say, when they emerged from the lake, that all these had not been shot by his majesty and Joe Manton? Who indeed? Not I, I assure the reader. The thousand rupees I drew from his majesty's treasury monthly were of too much consequence to me to permit of my hinting such a thing.

This kind of sport continued for three or four days. The resident and his party, however, arrived at the end of that time, and then the king had it no longer all to himself. The resident's friends shot, and we shot; boats were procured, and we went out in them over the lake, enjoying excellent sport. The trained hawks were now brought into requisition, and marvellous it was to see the instinct with which they seconded the efforts of their trainers. The ordinary hawking of the heron we had at a later period of this expedition; but the use now made of the animal was altogether different, and displayed infinitely more sagacity than

one would suppose likely to be possessed by such an animal. These hawks were trained especially for the purpose for which they are now employed. A flight of birds—thousands of birds—were enticed upon the water as before, by scattering corn over it. The hawks were then let fly, four or five of them. We made our appearance openly upon the banks, and in boats from concealed creeks, guns in hand, and the living swarm of birds rose at once into the air. The hawks circled above them, however, in a rapid revolving flight, and they dare not ascend high. Thus was our prey retained fluttering in mid-air, until hundreds had paid the penalty with their lives—the penalty of fear and sagacity, fear on their part, sagacity on that of the hawk. Only picture in your mind's eye the circling hawks above, gyrating monotonously, the fluttering captives in mid-air, darting now here, now there, to escape, and still, coward-like, huddling together, with the motley group of sportsmen on the bank and in the boats—and you have the whole scene before you at once.

Nothing could be more delightful than the bustling activity which pervaded our camp, as every day brought with it some new amusement; but unfortunately the king was by no means in the same excellent humour as before: his majesty was annoyed to find himself a secondary sort of personage;—as a sportsman, it may be easily imagined that the rank he took was not of the highest.

To us of the household, obliged to be constantly in attendance on the king, his ill-humour was a source of considerable annoyance; and he was soon induced to think of proceeding further into the country in pursuit of larger game. Yet it was not without regret that we left the picturesque lake and the well-appointed encampment on its banks. The boat-excursions over the water were delightful. It was a pleasant thing to be rowing away amid the wooded banks and by the sides of the overhanging foliage, now catching a glimpse, now losing it again, of the varied scene upon the rising ground, which was covered with the tents, the beasts of burden, the body-guards, and the motley people; it was a pleasant thing to come suddenly upon



some startled heron, as we opened up a little creek, to hear the bird scream out its disapprobation of our intrusion, flap its large wings energetically in the endeavour to rise, and then to see it falling helpless, brought down by a well-directed bullet ; it was a pleasant thing to see the groups of smaller wild fowl winging their flight away long ere we came near them—some bigger and bolder fellow remaining to the last intent upon his fishing, remaining too often only to share the fate he intended for his tiny prey, by becoming the prey of a larger animal in his turn.

Nothing more beautiful than the sun setting amid such a scene can be conceived. Whilst the red sky was reflected brilliantly in the waters beneath, and the red sunbeams tinged the foliage of the trees with a brilliant border, devout Mussulmans might be seen on the open bank in the neighbourhood of the encampment, engaged in the *mug-greeb*<sup>1</sup> or evening prayer, their figures distinctly seen in the waters beneath, as they kissed the ground, and bent the body, and knelt upon their little mats. Over them, too, the lurid beams of the sun exerted a gilding influence ; and whether dressed in the gaudy uniform of the body-guard, or in the more sober sepoy dress, or in the scanty costume of the labouring natives, still all was hallowed and illuminated, and rendered picturesque by the red sunlight. The cries of the birds, and of the monkeys, as they composed themselves in the forest, or called to each other with chirps or screams, harmonized well with the scene. The elephants stood upon the banks in silence, the camels lay in silence chewing the cud, with their bending necks moving gracefully as they brought up the balls of food into their mouths ; the horses, too, ate their evening meal in silence, picqueted about here and there, whilst some tiny bird and the still tinier insects filled the whole air with their noisy declamation. It is so in human life ; it is not the most useful part of mankind that makes the most noise in the world, but, generally speaking, that portion which is fondest of noisy talk and can declaim most loudly.

<sup>1</sup> *Maghrab ki nassaz*. Maghrab or Maghrib = west, sunset.

It was no difficult matter to induce the king to proceed farther into the interior of the country. He had been so well satisfied with his own exploits in the way of wild-fowl shooting before the arrival of the resident and his party, that he determined upon having other and more dangerous sport.

'We shall have deer-shooting, pig-sticking, and tiger-hunting,' said he, in a moment of enthusiasm, 'before we return to Lucknow.'

The encampment was broken up, and we journeyed northwards, in order to gain a part of the country where the wild boar and hog were to be met with. Considering the extent of the attendance upon the king, it may be readily conceived that our progress was far indeed from being a rapid one. The trained stags, used as decoys, were brought with us; the hawks, for we were to have hawking too; the cheetahs, a species of leopard trained to hunt the deer—these came in wagons with their keepers and attendants. There was the king's harem, of course, containing his wives, his numerous concubines, and the dancing and singing girls, their servants and their attendant female sepoys, forming a little army of covered conveyances in themselves; there was the body-guard, in its flaunting livery of blue and silver; there were elephants bearing tents and baggage; camels, some for riding, used chiefly by messengers, and some employed as beasts of burden; together with horses in abundance. When to all this is added *our* train, consisting of elephants, horses, and palanquins, it may be easily conceived that our advance was more like the march of an Indian army than the progress of a simple hunting-party.

The villagers living along the route by which we journeyed were thrown into consternation by our appearance. The king and his retinue had never made their way into this part of the country before; and the march of an Eastern sovereign through his dominions is a sad thing for the people. The king's servants regard themselves as a privileged race. They have a right, they think, to the best of everything, and to as much of it as they please; so that the plundering and maltreating of the unfortunate

inhabitants went on upon all sides. Besides this, was any difficulty to be surmounted, any impassable road to be made practicable, or a new road to be made where road there never had been before, the villagers far and near were turned out to do it—men and women and children all turned out to work as long as the nawab liked, their only pay the abuse and punishment they received if the work were not done as speedily as the nawab wished. People in England may possibly think such a state of things impossible; people in India who have visited the territories of any native prince must be aware that it is literally true.

At length we came to another lake, forty or fifty miles from that which we had left in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. It was more than twice the extent of the former one, and was altogether wilder in aspect. The snowy range of the Himalayas had gradually been becoming more and more distinct as we journeyed northwards; the country, too, was generally more hilly, and larger patches of jungle and forest alternated with the cultivated land. For several miles there had been no road but that hastily constructed by the nawab's orders in time for the passage of our vast and heterogeneous company. Right over rice-fields, and through forests, and across valuable meadows of Indian corn, was the road constructed; the destruction of property a secondary consideration, the comfort of the king and his retinue being of primary importance.

The encampment was formed at some distance from the lake, much in the same order and with the same arrangement as before. The resident, however, was not with us—his tents and retinue were wanting. The king went out shooting as before; but the marshy character of the banks rendered it by no means so pleasant for him as it was at the other lake. Herons abounded in the neighbourhood, and the hawks were brought forward. For several days we enjoyed keenly this delightful sport. None of us, except the king, had seen hawking before in its perfection. The flight of the bird when released; his swooping round and round in the air, slowly at first,

then more rapidly ; the sight gained of the rising heron, and the hawk's instant flight upwards to overtop the fugitive ; the anxious watching for the result, as the pursuer gradually gained the desired position right above his prey ; the instant dart downwards, like a lightning flash, whilst beak and claws were buried simultaneously in the heron's back ; and then the twirling tumble of both birds as they fell, turning round and round rapidly in their fall ;—all this was worth gazing at—all this was a scene not to be easily forgotten when once witnessed. But this was not all. No sooner was the blow struck than we dashed off on horseback to witness the fall. Quiet elderly gentlemen, much given to port and portliness, might then be seen scampering over the country in an eminently reckless way—over a difficult wild country too, as if fleeing from destruction behind, instead of being impelled simply by curiosity forwards. Every one was anxious to be in at the death—to witness the hawk extricated from his prey, both birds perhaps bruised and wounded with the fall. It was a pleasant thing to see the care with which the attendants inspected the feathery warrior, to see what injury he had received ; it was interesting, too, to see the eagerness with which, in spite of any amount of injury, the hawk seized his dainty morsel of the prey. The king was a good horseman, and enjoyed the sport as much as any.<sup>1</sup>

In his majesty's large tent we enjoyed our dinners as usual after these sports daily, everything being at the table exactly as in Lucknow ; there was no want of anything but moderation in the use of wine, to render these dinners generally comfortable enough. The well-cooked viands, the spacious dining-table, the large wax-candles, the gaudy china and valuable plate, the dancing-girls and the female attendants, with their fans of the peacock's tail—all were here exactly as though we had been in the palace in Lucknow, instead of being on the shores of a wild lake, with forest and jungle around us, fifty miles away from it.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Major Archer's description of indian hawking. *Tours in Upper India* (1833) i. 77-80.

The wild boar and the hog were not to be found in the neighbourhood, however, nor the tiger; so that for the 'pig-sticking' and the tiger-hunting we were to advance, after a time, farther north. Deer, however, abounded in the forest; and it was determined that we should have three varieties of deer stalking. In the first place, the trained stags were to be employed; secondly the cheetahs; and thirdly, we were to have a regular hunt on horseback and on foot. Such was the programme of the amusements for the ensuing week. The king began to get tired of the daily hawking and wild-fowl shooting.

I have never heard of trained stags being so employed elsewhere as I saw them employed in Oudh; I shall therefore be a little more minute in my description of this sport. Hawking and wild-fowl shooting are pretty much the same all the world over; but the decoy-stags were a novelty to me.

In our rides in the neighbourhood of the lake, near which we were encamped, we lighted upon a fine open country adjoining a forest, which would answer admirably for the purpose. The adjoining wood was full of the smaller game of Oudh, or, if not smaller, at all events the more harmless, amongst which the wild deer must be classed as one. Skilful beaters were sent off into the forest to drive the deer, as if unintentionally—that is without violence or making much noise—towards the point of the forest adjoining the open space I have just mentioned. Here, protected by its watching guardians, the most warlike and powerful of its males, the herd was congregated together in apparent safety.

We had about a dozen trained stags, all males, with us. These, well acquainted with the object for which they were sent forwards, advanced at a gentle trot over the open ground towards the skirt of the wood. They were observed at once by the watchers of the herd, and the boldest of the wild animals advanced to meet them. Whether the intention was to welcome them peacefully, or to do battle for their pasturage, I cannot tell; but in a few minutes the two parties were engaged in a furious contest. Head to head, antlers to antlers, the tame deer and the wild

fought with great fury. Each of the tame animals, every one of them large and formidable, was closely engaged in contest with a wild adversary, standing chiefly on the defensive, not in any feigned battle or mimicry of war, but in a hard-fought combat. We now made our appearance in the open ground on horseback, advancing towards the scene of conflict. The deer on the skirts of the wood, seeing us, took to flight ; but those actually engaged maintained their ground and continued the contest.

In the meantime a party of native huntsmen, sent for the purpose, gradually drew near to the wild stags, getting in between them and the forest. What their object was, we were not at the time aware ; in truth, it was not one that we could have approved or encouraged. They made their way into the rear of the wild stags, which were still combating too fiercely to mind them ; they approached the animals, and with a skilful cut of their long knives the poor warriors fell hamstrung. We felt pity for the noble animals, as we saw them fall helplessly on the ground, unable longer to continue the contest, and pushed down, of course, by the decoy-stags. Once down, they were unable to rise again.

The tame ones were called off in a moment ; not one of them pursued his victory. Their work was done ; they obeyed the call of their keepers almost at once, and were led off like hounds, some of them bearing evidence in their gored chests that the contest in which they had been engaged was no sham, but a reality. As we rode up, we saw them led off triumphantly, capering over the ground, as if proud of their exploits, tossing their fine-spreading antlers about joyously, and sometimes looking as if they would enjoy a little more fighting—this time with each other. The contrast presented by the overthrown wild animals was a pitiable one. There was no boisterous energy about them, no jumping and tossing of the head, no prancing or curvetting. All the energy of the noble beasts was concentrated in their eyes. As they lay, some upon their sides, some upon their bellies, they watched us with their large

black eyes intently. Incapable of further action, the faint glimmering of soul which they possessed shone fully in their fixed eyeballs. It was as if reproaching us that they looked thus full into our faces, as we rode from one to the other—conquered warriors, and hardly conquered by fair means; nay, certainly not conquered by fair means—it was simple butchery, that ham-stringing. When a whole field—men and horses and dogs—turns out in England to course after an unfortunate hare, one feels pity for the animal. The disproportion between the means and the end strikes every one at once. Yet I never felt so much pity for the hare under such circumstances—not even when I saw it torn to pieces by badly-trained dogs—as I felt for the mute, large-eyed, noble stags, as they lay there, looking reproachfully at us. The fact was, I was too soft-hearted for an Oudh sportsman. The signal was given by the king, and the throats of the poor animals were cut. It was the only thing that could be done with them. To have preserved their lives, or carried them off in that helpless state, would have been wanton cruelty.

This was the only use I saw made of the decoy-stags; but I was informed they are also similarly used when the intention is, not to destroy their adversaries, but to take them alive and uninjured. Two men then advanced towards each of the wild animals with a strong net,—they advance from behind as usual—the net is skilfully thrown over the head of the stag, and he is upset by a sudden jerk. Should he not be upset, but turn upon his assailants, the lives of the men are in danger—in imminent danger. Another difficulty in the matter is, to avoid entangling the antlers of the tame stag in the net as well. As long as the two animals are locked together, head to head, antler in antler, of course the net cannot be thrown successfully. It is only when both animals have retired a little to make another rush forwards, that the desired opportunity is afforded.

The trained leopard, called the cheetah, was also brought up during our stay at this encampment to hunt the deer.

Cheetahs are too commonly seen in the zoological collections in Europe nowadays, to render a description of the animal necessary. They differ from the common leopard chiefly in the form of the head, which is smaller and uglier, and in the spots on the skin, which are lighter and less varied. The cheetah is a taller and more powerful beast than the ordinary leopard. I have heard of their making their way, when very much in want of food, into the villages of Ceylon, and carrying off old men and women, or children. It is true, one naturally feels a little doubtful about Ceylonese accounts of wild animals, after the wonderful stories recorded by sportsmen who have been much in that favoured island; but looking only at the size and strength of the animal, I see no reason to doubt the fact, although in northern India such things do not occur. The tigers, perhaps, keep the smaller fry in order there, and reserve all the human hunting to themselves.

The conducting of the cheetah from his cage to the chase is by no means an easy matter. The keeper leads him along as he would a large dog, with a chain<sup>1</sup>; and for a time, as they scamper over the country, the cheetah goes

<sup>1</sup> Captain Mundy enjoyed this sport in 1827 and thus describes it:

'The mode of conducting the sport I may as well describe. The leopards are each accommodated with a flat-topped cart, without sides, drawn by two bullocks, and each animal has two attendants. They are loosely bound by a collar and rope to the back of the vehicle, and are also held by the keeper by a strap round the loins. A leather hood covers their eyes. The antelopes being excessively timid and wild, the best way to enjoy the sport is to sit on the cart alongside the driver; for the vehicle being built like the hackeries of the peasants, to the sight of which the deer are accustomed, it is not difficult, by skilful management, to approach within two hundred yards of the game. . . . On emerging from a cotton-field we came in sight of four antelopes, and my driver contrived to get within one hundred yards of them ere they took alarm. The cheetah was quickly unhooded, and loosed from his bonds; and, as soon as he viewed the deer, dropped quietly off the cart, on the opposite side to that on which they stood, and approached them at a slow, crouching canter, masking himself by every bush and inequality of ground which lay in his way. As soon, however, as they began to show alarm, he quickened his pace, and was in the midst of the herd in a few bounds.'—*Tour in India*, I. 48-9.



willingly enough ; but if anything arrests his attention, some noise from the forest, some scented trail upon the ground, he moves more slowly, throws his head aloft, and peers savagely round. A few more minutes, perhaps, and he would be unmanageable. The keeper, however, is prepared for the emergency. He holds in his left hand a coco-nut shell, sprinkled on the inside with salt ; and, by means of a handle affixed to the shell, he puts it at once over the nose of the cheetah. The animal licks the salt, loses the scent, forgets the object which arrested his attention, and is led quietly along again. As often as symptoms of excitement are exhibited, so often is the coco-nut shell applied to the nose ; and after each application the cheetah is docile and manageable.<sup>1</sup>

The race which takes place when the cheetah and his keeper have stolen unobserved within a moderate distance of the prey, is one of the most interesting and exciting kind. The deer is flying for his life ; and bounds straight forward over everything that would impede his progress, jumping, running, wading, swimming by turns, with frantic energy. On the other hand, the cheetah's blood is up. He is no laggard. The deer is his natural prey. How he leaps high over all obstacles ; how he bounds, cat-like, over the bushes, and even takes to the water rather than lose the fugitive, are things, once seen, to be remembered for many years. Nor is the part of the horseman an easy one. With all the care that had been taken to enable his majesty to get an

<sup>1</sup> 'If he (Hyder Ali) has leisure, he appears at a balcony, and receives the salute of his elephants. When the prince appears, his officers cry out, "Your elephants salute your majesty," and, at the same time, those animals, ranged in a semicircle round the palace, make three genuflections. His tigers of chase (cheetahs) likewise pay him a visit. They are led by hand, and are covered with a mantle of green and gold hanging to the ground, and a bonnet on their head, of cloth embroidered with gold, with which their eyes can be immediately covered, if they should chance to prove mischievous. Hyder himself gives each of them a ball of sweetmeats, which they take very adroitly with their paws, being exceedingly tame.'—*The History of Hyder Shah*, published by his grandson, Prince Gholam Mohammed, when in England, in 1855. [W. K.]

excellent view of the hunt ; with all the care that had been taken to select a suitable part of the country, and to remove obstacles—it was still by no means an easy task to keep up. We were well mounted on horses that entered keenly into the spirit of the chase, and kept their eyes, as we kept ours, fixed now upon the flying deer, now upon the pursuing cheetah ; and yet it was a difficult task to keep the chase in sight, particularly over the stubbly grass and marshy ground. There was evidently no royal road to the enjoyment of hunting, however, and his majesty and his suite were fain to be content. Helter-skelter we dashed along, keeping well together—for the king would never have forgiven us had we outridden him—now by the side of an ugly *nullah*, or bed of a stream, at this season dry ; now over the long wiry grass, that grew in tufts, affording most insecure footing to the horses as they dashed forwards—the cheetah seemed to skim over it without requiring footing at all ; at another time we found ourselves in an open space covered with a sort of scrubby brushwood, not more than two or three feet high ; the horses dashed on, however, regardless of the want of road, now finding an opening to the right, now to the left, until we left the brushwood behind.

At length the deer was fairly run down. The forest was near ; and if that were once attained, we felt convinced that the chase was over, as far as we were concerned ; for no horse could penetrate through the thick undergrowth of a tropical forest. The deer never gained it, however. Worn out with the long pursuit, and paralysed with fear at the indefatigable pursuit of its bloodthirsty foe, the poor animal leaped head-foremost into a little thicket, fancying, apparently, it was the beginning of the forest. Its branching horns were caught for a moment in the creepers ; and just as it had extricated them, and was bounding forwards again, the cheetah was upon it.

His majesty was well satisfied, for he was in at the death ; and having heard from us of the fox's brush, and the anxiety to secure it amongst sportsmen, had the tail of the deer fixed triumphantly in his hunting-cap.

## CHAPTER IV

### TIT FOR TAT

Geological problem—Royal inconvenience—Cruelty in a Hindu *zenanah*—Thunder-storm—Disturbance in the camp—Plunder—Keeping guard—The thief—Confusion—The barber—A friend in need—Return to Lucknow—Summary justice.

WE were at this period encamped to the north of a village called Misrik<sup>1</sup>—a few miles only to the north of it—between the Goomty and one of its tributaries, the Kutheny.<sup>2</sup> One of the expeditions that took us farthest from the encampment—whether an extraordinary run of the chectah, or a journey in search of a herd of deer, I do not remember which—brought us upon the borders of a small sheet of water, the shores of which were covered with a fine impalpable white sand, resembling, in its acrid taste and smarting pungency, as well as in its appearance, finely-powdered saltpetre.<sup>3</sup>

This deposit has been the subject of much interesting speculation amongst Indian geologists, and of not a little controversy. I do not pretend to be a scientific man, and therefore I feel bound to believe the evidence of my senses. Those, therefore, who assure me that this is nothing but fine sand, similar to what is found sometimes upon the sea-shore, only a little whiter in colour, ask me to believe what I have a very vivid recollection of my senses having refused to credit at the time. The water of the jheel or little lake was brackish, as might have been expected ;

<sup>1</sup> Misrikh, a small town, the head-quarters of a tahsil in the Sitapur district.

<sup>2</sup> Kathna, a tributary of the Gumti.

<sup>3</sup> Deposits of salt and saltpetre occur 'in a small area a short distance to the south of the town of Khairabad' (*Gazetteer of United Provinces*, xi, p. 11). Khairabad adjoins the Misrikh parganah (v. also Sleeman, *Journey through Oude*, i. 187 foll.).

and as we rode over the white powder, at first rapidly, but after a little more leisurely, clouds of the dust were raised into the air, and diffused themselves round and about us, as if they were no heavier than the atmosphere. There was fortunately no wind blowing at the time; had there been, we should probably have been blinded. As it was, our eyes and nostrils and mouths and ears were filled with the bitter smarting powder, each particle apparently, although too minute for vision, being large enough and acrid enough to leave a stinging sensation behind it, when it had made its way into the nostrils. Our horses felt the effect of the saltpetre shower as much as we did, and snorted and sneezed vehemently to get rid of its effects, wanting to turn at every step to the water, which was unfit for them to drink.

This uncomfortable ride was the beginning of the end of our memorable hunting expedition. The powdered saltpetre—as I must persist in calling it until I am supplied with a better name—insinuated itself with as little ceremony into the royal nostrils and eyes as into our more plebeian organs; and his majesty swore at it in excellent Hindustani and clipped English with an energy that one would hardly believe him capable of. It was amusing to hear one scientific member of our party assuring us that a more interesting geological phenomenon it would be impossible to discover anywhere; that we were lucky in meeting thus accidentally with a deposit which the savants of Europe would travel far to inspect. We sneezed, and coughed, and rubbed our eyes, and listened to him. The greater number of us had indeed shut our eyes as soon as the smarting pain had been first felt; but still the dust insinuated itself between the closed eyelids in an eminently pertinacious sort of way, and we began to fear at length for the eyesight of our horses.

‘What could be easier than to have retraced your steps when the inconvenience was first discovered?’ asks some one wise in his generation. From what I have already said, no one fancies for a moment, I am sure, that we continued

to ride over this powdered saltpetre from any affection for it, from any devotion to science, or any earnest desire to make ourselves martyrs in its pursuit: we were as anxious to escape from this sea of impalpable dust as a London alderman is to get rid of annoyance after dinner, and compose himself to a soothing nap. But then, how was it to be done? We did not come upon this 'interesting deposit' all at once. No one could say where it began, and where it ended. We had made our way into its midst gradually, crossing a little patch here, and then a little patch there, finding it here mixed up with earth, and there neutralized by a heavy loamy soil that would not let it rise. By the time we had reached the position in which our horses' hoofs turned it up in clouds all around and about us, we were in its midst, and it appeared shorter to go through to the opposite side than to turn and retrace our steps.

That evening, on regaining our tents, we prepared as usual for the royal dinner-party. His majesty had not yet recovered from the annoyance he felt; the powdered saltpetre still irritated his eyes and nostrils; he was uneasy, vexed, out of temper. We received scant courtesy from him that evening; nor could the buffoonery of the barber, or the most spirited sallies of the court-jesters, or the dancing of the nautch-girls, restore the king to equanimity. He was annoyed at having been allowed to get into so unpleasant a position. He ought to have been informed of the inconvenience beforehand. Even the suggestion of our scientific friend, that the deposit might turn out to be a valuable mine—a suggestion which arrested his attention for a moment, but was totally forgotten afterwards—did not suffice to remove his irritation. The king retired into the female apartments at an unusually early hour, and we returned to our tents. Heaven help the poor woman who has the misfortune at such a moment to displease or disgust an irritated despot! an accidental sneeze,<sup>1</sup> a louder cough than usual, nay, even an

<sup>1</sup> The punishment inflicted on a native in the court of Oudh, for

ungraceful movement, may bring down punishment terrible to think of; torture, perhaps, at the bare mention of which the English wife or mother or daughter would shudder. Such things take place but too often in the Hindu zenanahs<sup>1</sup> of India. English magistrates know that such things often take place; but they are helpless to punish or prevent. The zenanah and the harem are sacred; and the female slave that revealed their more horrid mysteries would suffer a lingering and excruciating death at the hands of the very women whom her revelations might be intended to protect. The chief, and the wealthy man, who is disposed to be cruel, can act despotically, tyrannically enough; but the king, with unquestioned power of life and death in his hands, if once infuriated or enraged, can torture and kill without question. 'My wife is about being confined,' said a savage Hindu rajah to his European friend, a solicitor; 'my wife is about being confined; and if she does not make me the father of a son, I will whip her to death with my hunting-whip.' The child was born—it was a daughter—and the woman's body was burnt two days after. How she had died, no one out of the zenanah certainly knew. The fact of the threat only transpired long afterwards, when it was the interest of the solicitor to whom the remark had been made to prove the rajah mad in his later days, in order to set aside a will!

Up to this period of our hunting expedition the weather had been remarkably fine. We were awoke, however, just after we had composed ourselves to sleep that evening, by a violent thunderstorm and a deluge of rain, the precursors of a changing monsoon. The lightnings flashed with a vivid intensity and a rapidity such as are seldom

sneezing in the king's presence, was the loss of the offender's nose! This barbarism is by no means uncommon in Oriental courts. [W. K.]

<sup>1</sup> Hindu is perhaps a *lapsus calami*. There is no reason to think that such practices were more prevalent among Hindus than Mohammedans.

seen out of the tropics. As we lay in our large square tent, five of us, the thunder appeared to roll exactly over our heads, and not to be further distant than the top of the tent-poles; whilst the lightning-flashes lit up the scene with their dancing zig-zag flights through the heavens and their sheet-like glare. Every two or three moments we could see, for an instant, as distinctly as possible, each object in the tent, together with the black outlines of the clouds outside, through our double canvas covering, for an instant only; and then all was gloom again—deep, dark, impenetrable gloom.

It was just about midnight. Between the intervals of the thunder the wind whistled and howled without like a demon. Our tent heaved up and down, now bulging uneasily out here, and then rapidly collapsing again, the tent-poles quivering unsteadily as the canvas flapped-to. We felt convinced that the tent would come down; and, all being awake, expressed our fears to that effect to each other. But we were mistaken. The servants busied themselves putting in a pin here and bracing up a rope there, and all remained secure. It was evident, however, that there was great excitement in the camp. In the intervals of the thunder we could hear, besides the neighing of horses, and the crying of camels, and the blowing of elephants, the shouts of men as they called to each other.

‘Some of the animals have got loose,’ said we to each other, when the rolling of the thunder and the howling of the wind would permit us to be heard.

At length the storm abated; and still the commotion in the camp continued, nay, became ever louder and more loud.

‘Several of the animals got loose,’ said we to each other. ‘It is to be hoped the elephants will not get amongst the tent-ropes, or down the tents will come.’

With this benevolent wish, and an order to the servants to see that the loose animals did not disturb us, or approach our tent, we composed ourselves to sleep again.

It was past midnight. We were relapsing fast into

unconsciousness ; for our tent was an excellent one, and the torrents of rain had incommoded us but little. I was in an easy dozing condition, half-awake, half-asleep, conscious and unconscious, enjoying the sense of security and comfort which my camp-couch afforded, when I contrasted the interior with the probable condition of the exterior of the tent. Still the noise of the animals and the cries of men grew ever louder, and it was impossible to sleep.

'Go out, Buxoo,' said I to my valet, 'and see what all the noise is about.'

Buxoo departed. Before he returned another servant was called by some one at the door of the tent, and we heard the announcement of 'a messenger from "the support of the world"', the oriental paraphrase for a king's servant.

The message was for the captain of the guard, one of our party ; an order to present himself before the king with all convenient speed. This order roused us from our half-dreamy condition. Something of importance was evidently on foot to cause the worthy captain to be called up at such an hour. The messenger knew nothing, except that there was great commotion in the king's quarters, and that one of the royal tents had been blown down. This in itself was food enough for thought. The nawab had the charge of the encampment ; could it be that the king was so enraged, that he determined to put the nawab under arrest, or worse, have him executed there and then ? Could it be that some frightful event had taken place in the zenanah, and a tumult had been the consequence ? Could it be—but there was no use in speculating.

My servant returned shortly after the captain's departure with information that there was a general movement in the king's quarters ; but either no one knew or no one would tell him why. He had even gone so far as to ask a jemadar, or native officer, what it was, and got struck in consequence.

This did not tend much to allay our curiosity. The rain was still falling, however in floods, and none of us felt



disposed to go out and seek information for ourselves. At length the captain returned again.

'Look out for your safety, gentlemen, and take care of your property—we are off.'

'Off!—where?—who?' we asked in a breath.

'The king starts for Lucknow in half-an-hour—we must attend him, of course—the whole force—his wives travel with him. He seems terribly annoyed, and very anxious to return to the capital immediately. Look out for your property, I say, or the villagers will confiscate it.' The captain ran on in this way, as he packed up and prepared, now ordering a servant, now giving one of his orderlies some package to take care of.

'Do you seriously think our property is in danger, captain?' I asked.

'Not if you defend it with spirit,' was his cool reply; 'but of course the poor villagers, who have been plundered and maltreated by the king's servants, will rush in upon the encampment when they know the king and the guard are gone—that always happens.'

It was impossible for us to travel with the king, we had not the requisite number of servants. Besides, it was the king's order that we should return with the nawab. Travelling fifty miles in a remote part of Oudh is a very different thing from going over the same space of ground on a well-kept road in Europe. We had an elephant each, and one horse or more; but covered vehicles, palanquins, were necessary for travelling in the day-time, and palanquins required relays of men all along the road to convey them. Besides, whatever baggage we did not take with us would certainly be lost; if not plundered by the villagers, it would never escape the nawab's servants.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but quietly to await the morning, in order to see what force of men the nawab could allow us, and what was the best arrangement that could be made under the circumstance.

We heard the snorting of the horses, and the monotonous song of the labourers who carried the palanquins, and the

heavy tramp of the elephants gradually dying away in the distance, as the king's party hurried off. There was no stopping, no delay. What his majesty wanted done, he must have that done at once.

The rain still pattered away upon the outside of our tent; it was a bleak, dark, miserable night. Our lamp stood on a little table in the centre of our tent, faintly illuminating the interior through the hazy vapour-laden air. We were stretched, four of us, upon our camp-beds, two at one side of the tent, and two at the other. Our palanquins stood at the doors—mine was inside, just across the door. We were not unmindful of the captain's warning; and it had been decided that we should relieve each other in sitting up, one after the other, an hour at a time, until morning came. A pair of loaded pistols and a sword were placed upon the table; and one of our little party, formerly an officer of dragoons in the Austrian service, and still bearing a warlike aspect from his huge moustaches, took his place first at the table, cigar in mouth. Numerous servants were scattered about on the floor of the tent; but they were not to be depended on; besides, they had a wholesome fear of the villagers, whom the day before they would have abused and browbeaten like the fiercest of braggadocios.

Our military guard sat in such a position that he could easily inspect both doors; and, with a dim recollection of having seen him stretching out his legs against the table, tilting back his chair, thrusting both his hands into the waistband of his *pyjamas* or sleeping drawers, and puffing vehemently at a superlative manilla—one of the king's own you may be certain—I fell off into a half-unconscious doze.

My couch was the nearest to the door on the left; our guardian dragoon was sitting with his back to it, and my native valet was snoring vigorously upon the ground, wrapped up like a bundle of dirty clothes, neither head nor feet visible, by the side of my couch. I fell off, I say, into a half-unconscious doze; but fortunately retained sufficient consciousness to perceive a stealthy crawling

sound in my immediate neighbourhood. I opened my eyes without otherwise moving—awake, wide awake, at once; and as I became so, I saw a dark brown arm rising as if from the earth, and seizing a bundle of clothes that rested upon a tin box in the corner near me. I had too strong a conviction that every particle of clean linen I possessed in the tent, and indeed nearly all the linen I had brought with me from Lucknow, was in that bundle, not to jump up at once and make a grasp at the long brown arm. It was gone, however, and with it the bundle, before I could seize it. Our military guard, hearing my exclamation, seized one of the pistols, and pointed it full at me as I sat on my knees, for an instant, watching the space between my couch and the doors; for I felt persuaded the robber had not yet had time to escape. It was all the work of a moment, of course. Our watch advanced pistol in hand—I leaped out of bed and seized a sword. The robber at the same instant glided like a snake from under my couch, and made a dart for the nearest door, that probably by which he had entered.

By this time all were awake, and sat up, making inquiries and uttering alarmed exclamations. I have said that my palanquin was placed across one of the entrances to the tent; the doors of it were open, and, as the robber darted forwards along the ground, he saw that his only hope of safety was a vigorous jump through the palanquin. He attempted this, and executed it as a monkey would have done. As our military watch advanced, pistol in hand, he saw the dark form of the robber bolting through the conveyance, and he fired. I too caught a glimpse of the thief as I turned, after seizing a sword; but only a glimpse—just saw him gliding through. Fortunately one of the servants had very unceremoniously been occupying my palanquin, and started just as the thief leaped over him—started, and rolled out of the conveyance, and through the canvas door of the tent, out upon the wet ground outside, fancying the pistol had been fired at him for his impudence. He and the robber rolled together in the mud, each afraid of

the other, each fancying he was attacked. The robber escaped, however, very soon, leaving the servant half-smothered in mud, and leaving behind him, too, my bundle of clean linen—clean no longer—soaking in a puddle hard by.

To those who have never travelled in a tropical country, it may appear that this was a slight misfortune. Had they experienced the comfort of a change of linen, and the discomfort of a want of it, when travelling with the thermometer between eighty-five and ninety, shut in by forest and jungle from a breath of air themselves steaming, the ground steaming, the vegetation steaming, and the elephant or horse, or human beasts of burden, steaming too, they would think differently. My valet was the first to find the lost bundle: I was thankful that it was found; but its condition turned my thankfulness into indignation. A yellowish-brown-mud, exceedingly soft and sloppy and insinuating, had made its way into every article of clothing it contained; and vehemently did I accuse the mustachioed watch of being the cause of my calamity, as I turned over piece after piece of foul linen. He laughed, and assured me that the fellow had not got off free, for he had lodged a ball in him. If this were true, he must have fired two from the same barrel; for I found a pistol-bullet sunk deeply into the frame of my palanquin in the morning. I did not fail to point it out to him; and he had the audacity to tell me, as he stroked his horse-hair-like beard, that he had observed that mark there several days before, and that he rather thought the bullet had been lodged there one night when I was asleep inside; all which, of course, was simply nonsense.

There was no more going to sleep that night. The villagers had soon discovered that the king was gone with the bodyguard, and they now broke into the encampment. Through the long dark hours we heard the cries of men and the shrieks of women resounding from the neighbourhood of the king's tents. The poorer portions of the female attendants had been unable to accompany the harem;

and they were now exposed to every wrong and injury at the hands of the outraged villagers. Tents were broken into and pillaged; ornaments were torn from the hands and feet of the poor women; boxes were broken open, and clothes seized belonging to the first ladies of the court. As for us, self-preservation is the primary law of nature. It was the nawab's duty, not ours, to protect the camp. We expected every moment an attack upon our own tent, and so we sat up prepared, one with his pistols, another with his gun, and a third with his sword, all looking fierce and resolute. We were reconnoitred doubtless by the plunderers, and they felt no desire to come to close quarters with us. But why not go out and try and save the women from outrage? asks some indignant reader, with more enthusiasm than knowledge. I will answer the question. The women left behind were, for the most part, discarded concubines, dancing-girls disgraced, or poor attendants. Had we entered their tents, calumny would soon have been rife in Lucknow; and some of these very ladies would have been the first to charge us with violating their privacy. A charge of having made our way into the harem would bring down at once upon us the anger of the king and of the resident; and then, farewell, a long farewell, to all our hopes of fortune, to the little or the much we had accumulated. In the second place, our own tent, left without a guard, would soon have been pillaged; and however chivalrous men may be, they do not usually take care of other people's property before their own. Fewer than four of us could not have ventured forth to the succour of the distressed damsels; many of whom, by the by, would not have thanked us for the interference, if everything we heard was true; and had we all gone, who was to prevent our clothes and our saddles, our couches and our travelling paraphernalia, nay, our very horses and palanquins, from being carried off?

Our horses were picketed round the tent, and could not be carried off without alarming the native grooms with

them ; for, on the first alarm, the ropes by which they were attached to the stakes driven into the ground were firmly tied round the arms of the grooms within.

Amid such sights and sounds as I have described we sat in our tent, smoking our cigars, during the long hours of darkness. In the morning, when we sallied forth to see the results of the tumult of the preceding night, a stranger or a more variegated scene it would not be easy to discover anywhere, or even to picture to the imagination. One of the royal tents had been blown down ; and so intent was the king upon instant departure, that he would not allow any attempt to be made to raise it again. Every man was to assist in getting ready what was needful for the rapid march back to Lucknow—more resembling a flight than a march ; and no one thought of the fallen tent—no one except the villagers, *they* had not forgotten it. Notwithstanding all that the guards of the nawab could do, it had been ransacked and plundered. Even the very coat and pantaloons the king had taken off the previous evening were stolen. The whole ground around the encampment was littered, when we visited it, with portions of female attire that had been dropped in the hot haste of the plunderers as they made away with their booty. Articles, many of them of considerable value, lay strewn about in hopeless confusion—articles of furniture, cooking-apparatus, clothing, trappings for elephants and camels ; the whole was, in fact, a complete litter of every kind of oriental requirement for the house, the person, and the road. Not *all* oriental, either. To our surprise, we noticed portions of female attire here and there never used by the Eastern ladies ; articles with which the shop-windows in London make the modest bachelor painfully familiar. We were perfectly aware that no European in the king's service—cook, barber, coachman, or of the household—had his wife with him during the march ; and our conclusion was, therefore, that these articles belonged to some ladies of the harem,<sup>1</sup> of whom we had heard and knew nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Among Nasiru-d-din's wives was one European, Miss Walters,  
KNIGHTON

That there had been hard fighting between the servants of the nawab and the villagers, was apparent enough ; for two men lay hacked and hewn almost to pieces upon the ground, both evidently strangers to the encampment ; and we heard that several of the nawab's servants had been severely wounded.

We returned to our tent, to partake of a hasty breakfast preparatory to departure. On reaching our quarters, we found everybody and everything in confusion and uproar. It was some time before we succeeded in making ourselves heard, and getting intelligible answers to the questions we asked, so fierce was the dispute, and loud and violent the abuse. It was evident at a glance that some servants of the nawab were in violent altercation with ours, about what or wherefore we could not understand. Sticks were even raised in an eminently threatening way upon both sides ; and, had our return been delayed, another fight would have taken place in our very tent.

'The good-for-nothings will not obey the orders of his excellency the nawab, O sahibs,' shouted the chief of the intruders.

'The vile sons of vile mothers want us to leave my lords' tent, and go and help them somewhere else,' screamed our servants in chorus.

Both parties spoke, Hindu fashion, at the utmost pitch of their voices. When men quarrel in India, they invariably try and frighten each other with loud talking.

We were evidently interested in the matter in dispute. A little questioning soon brought forth the information, that the nawab had sent an order to the sahibs' servants to assist in the general work of the encampment before departing ; and the messengers wanted to press into their service all our bearers and grooms—all not actually engaged

daughter of Mrs. Whearty, the widow of a Lucknow merchant, and Geo. Hopkins Walters, a retired Company's servant. She was married to the king in 1827, and received the name Mokuddera Ouloea (Muqaddari Oulia) ; she died November 1840. (*Sleeman, Journey, etc.*, i. 325, ii. 142.)

in packing or preparing breakfast. Had we submitted to this injustice, as we considered it, there was no telling when we should be able to depart ; and, with a large stock of muddy linen, it was my interest to get back to Lucknow as soon as possible. I was by no means the only one, however, who felt the necessity of immediate departure. The king's company would leave the country through which we had to travel bare enough of labourers to assist in carrying our palanquins ; if the nawab's also left before us, there is no telling when we should reach Lucknow, or whether we should reach it at all ; for the European members of the king's household were not popular in Oudh.

We reasoned calmly and quietly, representing the anxiety of the king for our presence, and his commands to follow him with all convenient speed. We were answered, that the nawab would take upon his own head the blame of our delay. We urged again, that it was our duty to attend his majesty forthwith ; and that if we gave up our servants without a struggle, we should be wanting in respect to ' the refuge of the world '. We were answered, that in the king's absence the nawab was the ruler, and that the command was his. We urged again, that we had several brace of pistols, six fowling-pieces, two rifles, and a large variety of swords, and that we were able to defend ourselves and our servants. The quiet reply was, that the nawab had three servants for our one, a much larger collection of arms, and if forced to use violence, would leave us no servants at all.

The quiet firmness of the officer sent with the party convinced us that the nawab was determined in the matter. Mingling his words with polite flattery and oriental exaggeration of our bravery and greatness, he yet persisted incessantly, never yielding so much as an inch.

We were at our wits' end. It was a very unpleasant position in which to be placed ; and to fight the nawab we did not intend. At length, as we still argued uselessly, the barber was thought of. Not a native attendant upon the court but had a hearty and unfeigned fear of the barber ; his influence was known to be preponderant. An old and



unsavoury proverb says, that if we think of a certain person he will appear. The barber was thought of at this moment, and the barber appeared. He was anxious to be off, too, immediately ; fortunately it was his interest, therefore, to travel with us, and to get to Lucknow as soon as possible. The circumstances were explained to him, and the little man seemed to grow big with indignation.

'You are all a pack of scoundrels together,' he exclaimed, addressing the officer, 'every one of you, nawab and all.' This was in English, and was intended for the officer alone. 'Go and tell his excellency,' he continued in his halting Hindustani, 'that the "refuge of the world" requires me to dress his hair. I must be in Lucknow without delay ; and these gentlemen will travel with me. Not a servant must be touched. Are there not villagers enough ?'

The officer said nothing in reply ; but bowed, and went his way. Nor did we murmur at being thus taken under the protection of the little hero of the curling tongs—not of the razor, for he did not shave the king. The barber was satisfied ; we were satisfied ; and if the nawab was not, he never let us know the fact—we heard nothing more of the want of servants.

Arrived in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, we found the king was anxiously awaiting us in the palace whence we had set out—Dil-kushar.

'You have left me long by myself, gentlemen,' said his majesty, when we made our appearance one morning whilst the barber was officiating as usual ; 'you have left me long by myself, gentlemen, in this dull place.'

'Your majesty travels more swiftly than ordinary men can do,' was the reply of one of our party.

'I am glad you are come : I have heard of the plundering of the camp by those rebellious villagers ; may their fathers' and mothers' names be reviled ! The khan has been telling me about it. Let me hear it all again.'

We told what we saw, and only what we saw. The king's anger grew fierce as he listened.

'To think,' he stammered forth, 'to think of the wretches

daring to put their defiling hands on the clothes worn by me and by my wives. By my father's head, but they shall pay dearly for it !'

'The nawab, I have heard, your majesty,' said the barber, 'has seized the principal offenders ; and is bringing them here to await your majesty's pleasure.'

'They shall die, khan, every one of them : no power on earth shall save one of them, if there are a hundred.'

Such was the sentence of the 'refuge of the world'.

We saw those miserable wretches afterwards, as they were being brought to the palace. They were certainly ferocious, cut-throat-looking fellows enough. Each was strapped down to a charpoy,<sup>1</sup> like a drunken man on a police-stretcher in England ; and all of them had cuts of swords or stabs of daggers about their persons, their wounds unbound and unattended to. There were probably a dozen of them. The fatal order was given, and their heads were cut off the same day. Whether they actually were the principal delinquents in the plundering of the encampment or not, I cannot of course decide ; the nawab's word was taken for it that they were. It certainly was his interest to appease the king by some such sacrifice ; and if these poor wretches had been only harmless villagers, seized for the purpose by the lawless soldiery who attended the nawab, it would have been no worse than things which constantly take place in India—not in native states only. A great crime was never yet committed there, but the police were sure to find out some poor wretches who should suffer as the criminals, and who, they were convinced, if you believed them, were the actual perpetrators.

Summary justice was the rule in Oudh. Except in Lucknow there were no jails ; so that when a man was taken up for a theft, if the suspicion was strong against him, or the swearing hard enough, off went his head forthwith. The chucklidsars<sup>2</sup> had not time for the adminis-

<sup>1</sup> *Charpoy* = a bed.

<sup>2</sup> *Chakladars* were district officers responsible for the collection of revenue, the administration of justice, and the general executive administration.

tration of justice after the European fashion. Bad as 'Company's law' may anywhere be, it is my honest conviction, that the people of Oudh would be a thousand times better off under a European magistrate—ignorant though he might be of their dialect, and unable to understand their evidence—than under the summary chucklildars.

## CHAPTER V

### FAVOURITISM

The barber's monthly bill—Nuna—Rise and fall of the Cashmere girl—The poet-dancer—Caprice—A friend from Calcutta—Silver-stick—The elephant-fight—Royal favour—Mr. and Mrs. Smith—The killut—My friend's departure.

WITH such a sovereign, and amongst people so generally submissive to authority as the inhabitants of India, it will be readily believed that the caprice of favouritism knew no bounds. The barber was an extraordinary instance, of course, of a man obtaining and retaining the king's affection; although he could scarcely speak the language of the country, and the king could express himself in English but imperfectly.

Of the title of nobility, the extensive authority in the palace, and the monopoly of European supplies, which the hero of the curling-tongs enjoyed, I have already spoken. He was also head of the menagerie, a sort of park-ranger in fact. I was once witness, and only once, to the length of the monthly bills which he presented to his majesty.

It was after tiffin, or lunch, when we usually retired from the palace until dinner-time at nine o'clock, that the favourite entered with a roll of paper in his hand. In India, long documents, legal and commercial, are usually written, not in books or on successive sheets, but on a long scroll, strip being joined to strip for that purpose, and the whole rolled up like a map.

'Ha, khan!' said the king, observing him; 'the monthly bill, is it?'

'It is, your majesty,' was the smiling reply.

'Come, out with it: let us see the extent. Unroll it, khan.'

The king was in a playful humour; and the barber was always in the same mood as the king. He held the end

of the roll in his hand, and threw the rest along the floor, allowing it to unroll itself as it retreated. It reached to the other side of the long apartment—a goodly array of items and figures, closely written too. The king wanted it measured. A measure was brought, and the bill was found to be four yards and a half long. I glanced at its amount; it was upwards of ninety thousand rupces, upwards of nine thousand pounds!

The king looked also at the total.

‘Larger than usual, khan,’ said he, as he did so.

‘Yes, your majesty, the plate, and the new elephants, &c. &c.’

‘Oh, it’s all right, I know,’ said the king, interrupting him; ‘take it to the nawab, and tell him to pay it.’

The signature was affixed, and the bill was paid.

‘The khan is robbing your majesty,’ said an influential courtier to the king some months afterwards; ‘his bills are exorbitant.’

‘If I choose to make the khan a rich man, is that anything to you—to any of you? I know his bills are exorbitant; let them be so; it is my pleasure. He *shall* be rich.’ Such was the king’s indignant answer.

But the barber was by no means the only example of the capricious favouritism of his majesty. Two particular instances I well remember of caprice pushed to the very verge of extravagance—yet caprice by no means unusual in despotic sovereigns, particularly oriental.

One of these cases was that of a Cashmere singing-girl. She was eminently handsome; with the large black eyes peculiar to the East, and that perfection of physical form more frequently observed in India than elsewhere, on account of the dress. English women buy their shapes ready made for them in cloth and whalebone; Indian women exhibit those forms which the Almighty bestowed upon them.

This Cashmere girl, Nuna by name, delighted his majesty all the more because the agent who had engaged her in the Punjab had said little about her merits. There was

a pathos about her voice in singing—a plaintive pathos, as she sang of the happy valley where she had been brought up; there was a languor with a drooping sadness about the large black eyes, and an indifference and ease of manner about every movement, all very charming to hear and see.

She was introduced only as an ordinary nautch-girl; but, fortunately or unfortunately for her, the other entertainment of the evening had been an utter failure, and a languid attention was bestowed upon her. The king looked, listened, was pleased, and expressed his pleasure. Nuna's eyes glowed with triumph and exultation as she heard his words; you could see the heaving of her bosom as she tried to compose her agitated thoughts. 'Shavash! shavash!' <sup>1</sup> (bravo! bravo!) shouted the king; and the poor girl's colour came and went, with pride and pleasure, as in a hectic fever. Blame her not, good reader; it was a king who was thus applauding, and two of that king's six wives were of humbler origin than Nuna.<sup>2</sup> Many a dancing-girl in India has given heirs to its proudest thrones. The mother of Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, heir of Runjít Singh, the lion-king of the Punjab, was a dancing-girl; <sup>3</sup> and Maharajah Dhuleep Singh has been the honoured guest of the Queen of England.

Blame not poor Nuna, then, if she felt intoxicated with joy. For a little I thought her excitement would have overcome her; but no, in a minute she was herself again.

<sup>1</sup> *Shāvāsh*.

<sup>2</sup> *Tāj Mahal* (v. *Elisaveth's Story*, p. 331), the reigning favourite in October, 1828, when Mrs. Parks visited the zenana, was originally a dancing-girl and her brother, who became Nawab Aminu-d-daulah, a fiddler. In January 1831, *Tāj Mahal* had been superseded in the king's favour by Gossaina (Kudusoea Begam), of whom Mrs. Parks tells that: 'The Nawāb Hakim Mehdi, finding his influence less than usual, adopted a Nāch girl as his daughter, because the king admired her, and induced the king to marry her. Her name is Gossaina; she is not pretty, but possesses great influence over her royal lover. This girl some fourteen months ago was dancing at the Residency for Rs. 25/- a night; and a woman of such low caste not even a sās would have married her.'

<sup>3</sup> Rani Jindan.

Every eye at our table was bent upon her. She recovered her composure, and danced and sang better than ever.

'You shall have a thousand rupees for this night's singing,' said the king.

A thousand rupees, a hundred pounds—a fortune to a poor Cashmere girl!

When the king was leaving the table for the harem, he would have no support but Nuna's arm. He went off, leaning his head upon her shoulder; and Nuna's colour went and came more rapidly than ever. It was indecorous, however, for his majesty to introduce a nautch-girl into the harem—custom prohibits such introduction in India; but little recked he of customs that interfered with his caprices.

The next evening, no other nautch-girl but Nuna would be heard. She was richly decorated; jewels glistened on her arms and ankles; the flush of triumph was on her cheek.

'You shall have two thousand rupees (two hundred pounds) for this night's singing,' exclaimed the king; and again was he borne off by Nuna from the table.

This went on for many evenings so. The king's liberality apparently knew no bounds; and the court bowed before Nuna. The king's wives no longer remembered that she was a nautch-girl. The female attendants, who had regarded her the first evening with contempt, were first civil, then respectful, then subservient and fawning.

'I will build you a house of gold, and you shall be my Padshah Begum<sup>1</sup> some day, Nuna,' exclaimed the king, at length, in a drunken fit of enthusiasm one evening. Nuna's favour was at its height.

Our dinners were interrupted for a week by some native holidays. We saw nothing of Nuna during that week. At its conclusion she reappeared again, looking and singing and dancing as well as ever.

<sup>1</sup> The chief wife—the queen—properly the first wife of the king. The Padshah Begum of Nussir was a daughter of the king of Delhi. The exclamation above was simply a drunken bravado. [W. K.]

'Bopperry bopp!' exclaimed the king, yawning as he gazed on her, 'but she wearies me. Is there no other amusement this evening? Let us have a quail-fight, khan.'

The barber rose to order in the quails. The king looked at Nuna with languid satiety.

'I wonder how she would look in a European dress,' he observed, half to himself, half to the tutor, who sat next to him.

No one replied. The barber reappeared, and the king made the same observation to him.

'Nothing is easier, sire, than to see how she would look,' was the barber's reply.

A gown and other articles of European female attire were sent for from the barber's house, for he was a married man; and when they were brought, Nuna was told to retire and put them on.

The quails came, and the fight proceeded on the table between the rival cocks.

Poor Nuna reappeared in her new costume. A more wretched transformation it is hardly possible to conceive. The clothes hung loosely about her in an eminently dowdyish way. She felt that she was ridiculous. All grace was gone; all beauty was hidden. It was distressing to see her disheartened look as she took her place again.

The king and the barber laughed heartily at her plight, whilst hot scalding tears coursed down Nuna's cheeks. The attendant females had no pity for her, and chuckled at her disgrace, turning up their pretty lips, just as Englishwomen used to do, in virtuous indignation, when they exclaimed,

'Impudent minx!'

For days, nay for weeks, did poor Nuna so reappear, a laughing-stock. The king would see her in no other dress. Everything she did was displeasing. She asked permission again and again to leave the court and return to Cashmere; but such permission was denied her. She interceded with the barber; but it was useless. His heart was of stone.



The Mohurrim<sup>1</sup> intervened. For forty days we saw nothing of the king, except occasionally at a morning durbār. During the Mohurrim there was no dancing, there were no European dinners in the palace. The king had made a vow, before coming to the throne, that if ever he *did* come to it he would keep the Mohurrim, not for ten days, as other people did, but for forty<sup>2</sup>; and he kept his vow.

The Mohurrim came, and we saw nothing more of poor Nuna. She never after appeared in the palace. What became of her I could never discover; and the barber was either as ignorant as myself, or pretended to be so. His conjecture was, that she had been given as a slave to some of the Begums, and was in the harem; but a eunuch told me she was not. Her name was once mentioned in the king's presence by me in an inquiring sort of way; but he took no notice of it.

The other instance was one in which we felt less sympathy with the king on the one side, and the subject of his favouritism on the other, than we did for the ill-fated Nuna.

He was proceeding, with his usual retinue, along a public road that ran through the rumna or park. We were all going to Chaun-gunge, one of those garden palaces at which the fights of wild beasts usually took place. The king was in an open carriage, thoroughly European in its equipments; his Irish coachman, a comical character, on the box, and four beautiful cream-coloured Arabs beneath him. It was a delightful day; and the king ordered the coachman to walk the horses, in order that he might enjoy the fresh air a little. It was the month of December, and the air was mild and balmy, the sun's rays by no means oppressive.

We were riding a little behind the carriage, the body-

<sup>1</sup> Particularly described in Chapter XII. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> The fortieth day from the first of Muharram is known as Chehlum, and upon this day is commemorated the interment of those who fell at Karbala; the heads of the martyrs which had been carried in triumph to Kufa having been restored to Zain-ul-abidin, a son of Husain, for this purpose.

guard following us. Occasionally one or the other rode up to the carriage, and conversed, hat in hand, with his majesty. We always took off our hats when he turned towards us or addressed us. The tutor was riding by the side of the carriage at the moment when a half-naked native, of tall stature and fine muscular development, emerged from the side of the road, and began dancing, and chanting a wild melody. The king turned to regard him. One or two troopers would have driven the fellow away; but his majesty called out to them to desist, and at the same time ordered his carriage to stop. It was the merest caprice that made him do so; at another time he would probably have laughed heartily at the troopers chasing the vagrant.

Peeroo, for that was the wild fellow's name, was delighted with the attention he attracted to himself. The whole cavalcade was stopped whilst he went on with his uncouth dancing and the nasal twanging of an irregular song, which he had composed himself. Some happily-turned compliment or ingenious piece of flattery in the song arrested the king's attention. He was pleased, heard the fellow to the end, and ordered a native attendant to give him five gold mohurs—a sum equal to £8.

'I will hear you again at the palace to-morrow,' said the king, as he drove on; whilst Peeroo assured him in reply, that the favour of the asylum of the universe was to him what the heat of the sun was to the palm-tree.

Peeroo was a poet, in his own wild way; and, unlike poets of old, had little bashfulness. He made his appearance next day at the palace, and offered to sing a new song; but the king would hear nothing but the same one that had first charmed him. Day after day did the lucky Peeroo make his appearance at the palace; and day after day did the king hear the same melody, finding apparently ever new delight in it. Largess was showered upon the head of the fortunate minstrel, and he began to be somebody in Lucknow. Before a month had passed away, the nawab, imitating his master, gave presents to Peeroo; the commander-in-chief did the same; Rajah Buktawir Singh,

the head of the police, followed suit, and money flowed fast into the open palm of Peeroo.

There was every probability that the adventurer would one day stand high amongst the nobles of Oudh, and people bowed to him as he passed. 'But surely this could not last?' exclaims the reader. One would suppose not, certainly; but it did last notwithstanding. Apartments were prepared for Peeroo in the palace. His formerly nearly naked form was clothed in purple and fine linen. The nawab and the commander-in-chief and Rajah Buktawir Singh, the three leading natives of the court, spoke to him as to an equal; and right jauntily did Peeroo carry his fine clothes and his new honours. When was there a poet yet who thought he got his deserts?

At first daily, then weekly, then monthly, and, in fine, rarely, did Peeroo sing his songs before his majesty; but he still continued a favourite. When I left Lucknow—about eighteen months after we had first seen him emerging from the side of the road, like a wild man of the woods, and in danger of being chased like a wild beast by the troopers—Peeroo was a noble, and a noble of note, in the court of Lucknow. I have forgotten the title which he received; but he was made a Singh of course, to which I doubt not Rajah was subsequently prefixed; for Peeroo was a Hindu. Rajah and Singh are exclusively Hindu titles, I believe; Nawab and Meer are Mussulman.

And now that I am on this subject of favouritism, I cannot do better than bring in an account of the visit of a friend of mine from Calcutta—since sheriff of Middlesex—who particularly pleased the king.

I had been some months in Lucknow when he wrote to me from Allahabad that he was returning to England, and had determined to see something of the upper provinces before he went. His object in writing was to know whether, if he came to Lucknow then, there was any chance of his seeing any of the animal fights, anything of the court, anything, in fact, peculiar to Lucknow, and for which the capital of Oudh was famous.

My correspondent had made a good deal of money as a merchant in Calcutta. He had been an intimate friend of mine. I was anxious to oblige him. Men who have made their fortunes seldom find their friends disobliging. I wrote to him forthwith, telling him to come at once ; that I could show him the lions of the palace, give him a good view of the king, and take him through the menagerie. More I could not promise. Talking, however, with a courtier-friend on the subject, he remarked that the barber could easily get the king to have a good animal fight—of elephants, for instance—if he felt so disposed. 'Let us try, at all events,' he added ; 'there is no harm in trying.'

There was a billiard-table in the barber's house, maintained by the king for the use of his European suite, at which we frequently assembled. One or other was almost always to be found there about the middle of the day. I found the great little man busy playing a game himself with the captain of the bodyguard.

'A friend of mine (Mr. R. of Calcutta) is coming over from Allahabad to see Lucknow,' said I to the favourite ; 'I suppose he can see the menagerie.'

'Certainly,' said the barber, graciously ; 'I will give you a *chobdar* (a silver-stick in waiting) to accompany him if you like.'

The barber was park-ranger, and the superintendent of the menagerie ; his *chobdar*, therefore, would suffice to show us all that was to be seen there.

'I suppose there is no chance of an elephant-fight?' said I, in a careless, off-hand sort of way, as I watched the game.

'Cannon and pocket both, captain, by jingo !—Eh ? I don't think there are any elephants *must*<sup>1</sup> just now,' was the barber's reply.

After a pause of a moment's duration, he turned round to me again, and asked abruptly :

'Is your friend a mercantile man ? would he do a little

<sup>1</sup> That is, in that excited condition usually called *hant*. It is only when in this state that the elephant will fight. The females are never fought. [W. K.]

in the way of investing money for me in Company's paper, do you think ?'

'He is a mercantile man. You have heard of him, doubtless. R. of R. B. & Co. He has made his fortune ; but I have no doubt that he would do anything reasonable to oblige me.'

'Then it 's all right. I'll settle the fight. If there are no elephants *must*, we can have tigers or rhinoceroses, perhaps. Count upon me. Off the red again—that 's the game, captain. I owe you fifty rupees.'

I went away well content.

My friend arrived on the following morning. I went to the private durbar to hear what was said about the animal fight. The barber was dressing the king's hair as usual ; and as he dressed it, conversed with his majesty.

At length, in a pause of the conversation, he observed :

'Your majesty hasn't had any fights lately.'

'No,' said the king ; 'I'm sick of them. I don't think, though, there are any elephants *must*.'

'There are, your majesty. I was informed so this morning.'

'Do you want to have one ?' asked the king.

'If your majesty so wills it, yes. Mr. R., one of the richest of the Calcutta merchants, has arrived ; and as he is seeing Delhi, Agra, and other places, we don't want him to go away without good impressions of Lucknow.'

'Certainly not,' said the king ; 'and you can make him useful besides, I suppose, in Calcutta or England. Eh, khan ?'

'Your majesty discovers everything,' said the wily barber.

It was settled that the fight should come off the following day, about one o'clock, at Chaungunge. I returned to my friend, to apprise him of the fact.

'You must be civil to the barber,' I concluded, 'for he has done it all for you.'

'Civil to him ; who would not be civil to him ?—a king's favourite and a noble !—to be sure I shall.'

Mr. R., of R. B. & Co., had evidently the primary qualifications necessary for a good courtier.

The chobdar came in due time ; and we sallied forth with him to inspect ' the lions ' of Lucknow before going to the menagerie to see the tigers. Of these ' lions ' I must afterwards say a few words ; but I cannot interrupt my story now to describe them. Of the tigers I shall have plenty to say hereafter.

Before the magical wand of that silver-stick (the chobdar) everything flew open : the palace ; the offices of government ; the military stores ; the Topkhana or arsenal ; the Emanbarra,<sup>1</sup> too, which Bishop Heber (somewhat profanely, one would say, were he not a bishop) calls the Mussulman cathedral ; the mosques ; the gardens ; Constantia, the palace of General Martine ; the menagerie and the park.

On the following morning we drove out to Chaungunge, where all was prepared for the elephant fight. It was the usual scene of such encounters, a small lodge, like a country house, with large enclosures in its neighbourhood, situated three miles from Lucknow on the other side of the Goomty.

Securing another chobdar for the purpose, I placed my friend in an apartment beneath, whence he could have a favourable view of the fight in the court-yard adjoining. I could not remain with him ; for it was my duty to ascend to the gallery above, and attend upon his majesty. The kettle-drums—emblems of sovereignty in Oudh, and only borne before the King and Padshah Begum or Queen—the kettle-drums announced the arrival of ' the refuge of the world '. I ascended to take my wonted station, excusing myself to my friend.

The king soon made his appearance, and took his seat upon a sofa prepared for his reception ; the female fanners took their places behind him. We stood, some leaning over the parapet, some with a hand on the corner of the sofa, on each side.

' Mr. R. from Calcutta is stopping with you,' said the king, addressing me.

<sup>1</sup> *Imām-bārā*. (Heber, *Narrative*, ii. 65.) This building is in no sense a cathedral ; it is the mausoleum of Asafu-d-daulah.

'He is, your majesty,' was my reply.

'And where is he?'

'He is beneath, Sire, in an apartment looking out upon the court-yard.'

'Why did you not bring him here?'

'I could not so far presume upon your majesty's goodness.'

'Pshaw, nonsense; let him be brought; he will see nothing there.'

Had I ventured to introduce him without the king's direct command, he might probably have been ordered out of 'the presence'.

I went below forthwith.

'The king commands me to bring you up to him,' said I.

'Many thanks to his majesty, but I had rather stop here,' was his cool reply.

'You must come. It would be an insult not to come.'

'Some men have greatness thrust upon them,' said he, as he prepared to mount to the gallery.

'Stop, stop, not so quick,' said I, detaining him; 'you must not go before the king empty-handed. You must offer a present of some gold mohurs.'

'I shall do nothing of the kind. What I pay some gold mohurs for looking at him?'

I explained that it was a mere form. That the king would nod, or touch the coin, as he felt disposed to be cool or cordial; and when that was once done, he might put the money in his pocket again. I had sent off to borrow the coins. They came; and my friend, duly prepared, ascended—with a white handkerchief on his open palm and the pieces of gold on the handkerchief. He drew near the king. His majesty looked keenly at him for a moment, and then placed one hand under his, and touched the money with the fingers of the other hand. It was a mark of the greatest cordiality, and he ought to have been greatly pleased and flattered. Instead of being so, he looked puzzled. As he afterwards told me, he thought the king was going to take the money; and he was thinking of shutting his hand

and preventing him; 'for these natives are not to be trusted,' said he, as he told me this. But he was speedily relieved by the king withdrawing his hand, and he then put the money into his pocket forthwith.

The signal was given, and the elephants advanced against each other. The fight was an ordinary one—nothing remarkable about it—ending in the flight of one of the combatants. My friend seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and the king was delighted with his honest admiration. Before the contest ended, his majesty had become so much fascinated with his new acquaintance, that he invited him to sit beside him on the sofa. Mr. R., doubtful whether this was quite right, and seeing us all standing, hesitated, and declined, saying he was 'very comfortable'. Nothing could be more rude; for the king intended to do him a great honour. At another time, such conduct might have drawn down one of the darkest frowns and one of the abruptest orders to leave 'the presence', upon the offender. But the king was in an excellent humour, laughed at the brusque reply, and repeated his invitation. Mr. R. looked at me distressed, the laughter making him fear he had been guilty of some unintentional rudeness. I beckoned to him to sit; and down he sat on the extreme verge of the sofa, most uncomfortably. The attendant females now divided their fanning between the king and his honoured guest, for such was the etiquette.

At length, the spectacle concluded, we returned to our elephant. I attended the king as he entered his carriage.

'We dine alone to-day; bring your friend with you,' said he, as he rested for a moment upon the arm of the favourite.

'You are in luck, my friend,' said I, as I mounted the elephant after Mr. R. 'You are to dine with his majesty.'

'The devil I am!' was his irreverent exclamation. 'I had rather a thousand times dine alone, or with you.'

'It must not be. In truth, you are already a favourite. It was a great honour he did you in asking you to be seated.'

'An honour I would gladly have dispensed with. Stand-



ing was infinitely more comfortable than sitting on the knife-like edge of that sofa.'

Yet, with all his depreciation of the honours conferred upon him, I saw that Mr. R. was well pleased at heart to have made so favourable an impression. I had not much difficulty in getting him to accept the king's invitation. He evidently began to suspect that nature had intended him for a courtier, not for a merchant; and he paid more attention to his toilet in consequence, that evening, than he had ever paid before.

When we followed his majesty into the dining-room, he would have his newly-found friend seated next to him at dinner.

'Perhaps, master, you will let Mr. R. sit beside me,' said the king, turning to the tutor; and the tutor made way forthwith. This was another honour; but my friend Mr. R. was beginning to become so accustomed to honours, that he accepted it with the greatest possible *sang-froid*, as if, indeed, to sit beside a king at dinner was a thing he had been accustomed to all his life.

As course succeeded course, and one bottle of champagne popped pleasantly after another, the king's heart opened. 'The greatest of my friends is in England now,' said he; 'and you are going there too.'

This 'greatest of his friends' was a former resident,<sup>1</sup> with whom the king had been on very intimate terms; let us call him Mr. Smith; that name will do as well as any other. Mr. Smith had a very captivating wife; and scandal did say that the king was fonder of Mrs. Smith than of her husband. All that, however, was before my time in Lucknow, so that I can only speak as rumour reported. Mr. Smith left Lucknow, quoth rumour, with seventy-five lakhs of

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Mordaunt Ricketts, resident from 1821 until 1830, when he absconded from Lucknow under the circumstances above suggested. His wife, to whom he was married by Bishop Heber in 1824, was the widow of George Ravenscroft of the Bengal Civil Service, the story of whose death in May 1823 Sleeman narrates. *Journey through Oude*, i. 112 foll. See also Sir George Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, ch. x, pop. ed., p. 450.

rupees, that is with £750,000. So large was the amount invested in Mr. Smith's name in Company's paper, that an investigation took place—an investigation conducted by the Bengal Government, with closed doors ; and the result was that Mr. Smith resigned the service and returned to England.

'The greatest of my friends is in England now,' said the king ; 'and you are going there too.'

There was pathos in his majesty's words—a pathos conceived of sentiment and born of champagne.

'And who had the honour to be your majesty's greatest friend ? ' asked Mr. R., somewhat boldly.

'Wah, wah, but it was Mr. Smith ; he was once resident here,' was his majesty's reply.

'Mr. Smith ! ' exclaimed my friend, 'Mr. Smith ! I was his agent. I knew him well.'

'You knew him, my friend, my good friend, my very good friend ; you knew him, did you say ? I loved him, and—well, it's no matter now. *Boppery bopp !* but I could cry over it. Fill your glasses, gentlemen—a bumper, a brimming bumper to Mr. Smith.'

The bumper was drunk—a tumbler of champagne was poured incontinently down every man's throat.

'And now, gentlemen,' said the king, 'fill your glasses again—to the brim, gentlemen. Two bumpers to Mrs. Smith.'

Two bumpers disappeared—two tumblers of champagne rolled whizzing down the throats of us all.

The king was fast succumbing. His sentiment and the champagne were too much for him.

'Shall you see my best friend, Mr. Smith, in England ? ' he asked.

'I must see him. I have business to transact with him,' was Mr. R.'s reply.

The king took off his beautifully-jewelled watch,—a watch of excellent workmanship, that had cost 15,000 francs in Paris ; watch and chain, he took them both off, and throwing the chain round my friend's neck, 'Promise

me,' said he, 'promise me as a—hic, hic—as a gentleman, that you'll put that chain round Mrs. Smith's neck as I put it round yours—hic, hic—promise me.'

'I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, I will, if she'll let me,' was Mr. R.'s prudent reply.

'Tell her it comes from me, and she will ;—hic, hic—khan, go and order a *killut*<sup>1</sup> for my friend, a *killut* of some worth, and—hic, hic—add five hundred gold mohurs to it.'

The *killut* or king's present was brought—two Cashmere shawls of exquisite workmanship, and a handkerchief for the neck. The king himself put the shawls and the handkerchief on his newly-found friend, being assisted therein by the barber ; and Mr. R. perspired amazingly, for it was very hot ; perspired and professed himself highly honoured. The revel continued into the small hours of the morning. His majesty could talk only of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, his very good friends, saying far more than it would be safe for me to put on record.

Our palanqueens awaited us—the revel was over. The king was assisted into the harem, after an affectionate leave-taking with Mr. R. ; and, still accoutred in his dress of honour, I followed my friend down to the portico where our vehicles stood. The distance was not great, but the stairs were very wide.

Next morning, before we had concluded breakfast, a servant of the nawab made his appearance with a bag of gold mohurs, five hundred in number, which he placed upon the table, as a part of the *killut* of the 'refuge of the world' for R. Sahib. Mr. R.'s first impulse was to refuse accepting it. I assured him that he could not offer a greater insult to the king, which was the case. Yet it was not without much talking that I persuaded him to retain the £800 thus thrown into his purse. Court etiquette required it to be accepted unhesitatingly ; to have refused it would have been to say that it was not enough, and that he was determined to insult his majesty in return.

A messenger from the king made his appearance shortly

<sup>1</sup> *Khū'at*. Robe of honour.

after, requiring my attendance in the palace. I lost no time in presenting myself before his majesty, who exclaimed, as soon as he saw me :

‘ I am delighted with your friend—I am charmed with him ; tell him, if he will stop here, and take service in my household, he shall be my very good friend.’

The barber was evidently uneasy at this ; for he met me at the door, and asked me,

‘ Do you think Mr. R. will stop ? ’

‘ I cannot tell,’ was my reply ; ‘ he seems pleased that the king took so much notice of him.’

I returned to my house, and reported the king’s message. It was useless, however. England and home presented greater attractions to the exile than the favour of a monarch. He was grateful, but determined. That evening he left Lucknow.

The reader may feel disposed to remark here, that this lavish expenditure—thousands of rupees and hundreds of gold mohurs bestowed upon his minor favourites, and nearly ten thousand pounds a month paid occasionally for the barber’s bills, must have soon emptied his majesty’s treasury. And the reader’s remark is well founded and just ; for, though the revenues of Oudh were nominally upwards of a million and a half a year, yet, out of that, troops had to be paid, and the expenses of a court maintained. This, however, is to be remembered, that Nussir’s father, Ghazi-u-deen, left his treasury well filled, and Nussir emptied it,—that besides the ordinary revenue, there were confiscations and fines constantly made and levied, to a far greater amount than the king’s presents ; and that the wealth of the other members of his family, which was vast, was occasionally put under contribution. Notwithstanding all this, however, for the last year or two of Nussir’s reign there was a great want of money in the palace of Lucknow.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ' LIONS ' OF LUCKNOW

The throne-room—The levée—The Emanbarra—Constantia—General Martine—Mosques and houses—Apartments underground—Lucknow beggars.

THERE is little more to be said about the royal palace—the Fureed Buksh<sup>1</sup>—than what I have said about it already. Its extent, its numerous courts, its tanks or ornamental ponds, its gardens, and its extensive out-offices, all mingled and commingled together, were its chief external characteristics. Its rich hangings, its profuse gilding, its gaudy ornaments, its groups of curiosities, its dazzling lustres and sparkling chandeliers, were the chief peculiarities of the interior of the state apartments.

The throne-room<sup>2</sup> alone is deserving of especial notice. Like all the other state-rooms, it had partaken of the alterations introduced by Nussir's European mania. Rich scarlet-and-gold hangings covered the walls, imposing enough in their appearance. A dim religious light came from the upper windows, which enhanced the solemnity of the royal receptions. A few full-length portraits of the royal

<sup>1</sup> Farhat Baksh, 'giver of delight.' This was the name of the original building erected by General Martine, as his residence, and sold by him to Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan, which adjoins the Chatter Manzil, and is now used as the Station Library. It is applied by Knighton to the whole range of buildings on the south of the Gumti which constituted the palace precincts in Nasir-u-d-din's time. It is described by Miss Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan*: 'The palace which faces the Goomti comprises six principal courts or quadrangles surrounded by pavilion-like buildings. In the first of these the attendants of the court have their apartments. . . . The second court, encompassed by state apartments, is laid out as a garden, having a well or bowlee in the centre.'

<sup>2</sup> Now known as the Lal Baradari, and utilized as the Public Library. It was built by Sa'adat Ali Khan.

family of Oudh were visible here and there between the hangings—portraits by no means badly done. Bishop Heber justly remarks,<sup>1</sup> that the portrait-painter of the first king, Ghazi-u-deen, might have won distinction in London or Paris. The throne itself occupied the upper end of this large hall, and was a structure of great value. It consisted simply of a platform about two yards square, raised several feet above the floor, and approached in front by six steps. Upon three sides of it a golden railing extended. The sides of the platform were of solid silver, richly ornamented with jewels. The former king and the nawabs of Oudh had been accustomed to sit in oriental fashion (after the manner of tailors with us) on a rich cushion placed on this platform; but Nussir was too much Europeanized for that. He had a splendid chair of gold and ivory placed there instead of the cushion or musnud.

A square canopy, supported by poles—the whole of wood, covered with beaten gold—hung over the throne. Precious stones ornamented this canopy and these poles in great numbers. A magnificent emerald, said to be the largest in the world, was conspicuous in the front of the canopy above. The hangings, like those of the room, were of crimson velvet, with rich golden embroidery and a fringe of pearls. A gilt chair always stood upon the right of the throne for the resident.

<sup>1</sup> 'I sat for my portrait to Mr. Home four times. He has made several portraits of the king, redolent of youth, and radiant with diamonds, and a portrait of Sir E. Paget, which he could not help making a resemblance. He is a very good artist indeed for a King of Oudh to have got hold of. He is a quiet, gentlemanly old man, brother of the celebrated surgeon in London, and came out to practise as a portrait painter at Madras, during Lord Cornwallis's first administration, was invited from there to Lucknow by Saadat Ali a little before his death, and has since been retained by the king at a fixed salary, to which he adds a little by private practice. . . . Mr. Home would have been a distinguished painter had he remained in Europe, for he has a great deal of taste, and his drawing is very good and rapid; but it has been, of course, a great disadvantage to him to have only his own works to study.'—Bishop Heber, *Narrative*, ii. 77.

On the occasions of public *darbars*, or councils of state, the chief nobility of Oudh, and any English officers whom the resident chose, were presented to the king. They advanced with the usual present in their hands, just as I have formerly described, salaaming low as they came. The king touched the present with his finger, if disposed to be very gracious, or bowed distantly if anxious to display resentment. The nawab, or prime-minister, then took the present, and laid it on one side of the throne, and the presenter retired backwards to the right or left—usually to the right, if a European; to the left, if a native. When all had been presented, the king placed a necklace of honour on the resident, and the resident returned the compliment. They then advanced into the centre of the hall, where necklaces were bestowed upon those whom it was the king's intention to honour, or whom the resident wished to be honoured. These necklaces are called *haaris*,<sup>1</sup> and are usually formed of silver ribands. We of the household frequently got them, and invariably sold them afterwards to some of the native jewellers about the court. They varied in value from five to twenty-five rupees (10s. to 50s.).

After these ceremonious levées were concluded, the king usually conducted the resident to the door of the apartment, poured attar of roses on his hands at leave-taking, and exclaimed, '*Khoda hafiz*', God be with you. His majesty then made his way in all haste to the private apartment, where we awaited him at lunch. Taking his seat, he would toss off the crown with very little ceremony, throw his robes aside, snap his fingers impatiently, and exclaim, as he seated himself:

'*Taza be taz*,<sup>2</sup> it's all over, thank God! *Boppery bopp*! but I am dying of thirst; how wearisome all this is!'

The king's Emanbarra,<sup>3</sup> called the Shah Nujeeb, is

<sup>1</sup> *Hār*.

<sup>2</sup> The beginning of a native song. Here it means nothing more than *fiddle-de-dee* in English. [W. K.]

<sup>3</sup> *Imāmbārā*, 'enclosure of the Imam'. Knighton is mistaken in identifying the great *Imāmbārā* with the Shah Najaf. The Shah Najaf, which is situated close to the Sikandra Bagh, was built by

unquestionably the finest building in Lucknow, in an architectural point of view. An Emanbarra is a building raised by that sect of Moslems called Sheahs, for the celebration of the Mohurrim, which shall be more particularly described in a subsequent chapter. Every family of distinction has its own, and the owner is not unusually buried in it.

The royal Emanbarra stands near the 'Constantinople gate' of Lucknow (the *Room-i-darwaza*)—a gate built on the model of that which gave to the court of the sultan the title of 'the Sublime Porte'. Both structures, the gate and the Emanbarra, are elegant, and harmonize well with each other. Two square courts extend in front of the building of the Emanbarra, beautifully decorated with rich tessellated pavements. The inner of these courts is raised several feet above the level of the outer.

The Emanbarra belongs to that style of architecture aptly called by Bishop Heber 'the oriental Gothic'. It combines the minarets of the Mussulman temple with the pointed domes of the Hindu,<sup>1</sup> and is, on the whole, a lofty, imposing, well-proportioned edifice. Its central hall is upwards of 150 feet long, by 50 wide; and its brilliant character may be conceived when it is stated, that a grave writer, who had evidently visited it, asserts that Asophu-dowlah, one of the most magnificent nawabs of Oudh, spent a million of pounds sterling in furnishing it with chandeliers and mirrors.<sup>2</sup> This statement I regard, however, as a gross exaggeration.

Let us pass from the Emanbarra to Constantia<sup>3</sup>—a

Ghaziu-d-din Haider as a last resting-place for himself and the members of his family. This mistake is probably due to Lawrence, who in his article on the kingdom of Oudh, *Calcutta Review*, 1845, speaks of 'the Shah Nujuf or Royal Imam-bara' (c. supra, 81).

<sup>1</sup> The pointed dome or cupola is not a Hindu characteristic, but pre-eminently Mohammedan.

<sup>2</sup> *The Calcutta Review*, vol. iii, p. 381. [W. K.]

<sup>3</sup> The Marquess of Hastings, who stayed at Constantia during his visit of 1814, writes that 'the idea of it was probably taken from those castles of pastry which used to adorn desserts in former days'.



whimsical pile of buildings of vast extent, erected at a great expense by General Martine, a Frenchman. Having entered the Company's service, towards the end of the last century, as a private soldier, he was afterwards transferred to the army of the nawab of Oudh, and rose step by step to the rank of general, amassing enormous wealth as he rose. He was a prudent and successful cock-fighter; and Saadut Ali, the reigning nawab of those days, was fond of betting with him.

General Martine left £100,000 to found a school for orphan children in Lyons, his birthplace; a similar sum for founding a similar institution in Calcutta; and an amount nearly equal for a third in Lucknow. Each of these institutions is called *La Martinière*, as directed by the founder, and all are flourishing and useful. Constantia, his residence, he left to the public as a serai or caravansery.<sup>1</sup> It was called, I was told, after his first love, a French maiden, whom he had left behind him in France, and who died long before he attained to wealth and honours. To prevent the nawab from confiscating the building and estate, the general was buried, by his own directions, beneath it; for a Mussulman, however unjust, will respect a grave. His tomb, in a sort of crypt beneath, is shown to visitors. A white marble bust of him stands on a sarcophagus, supported by two figures of scpoys, coloured! The whole is in execrable taste.

It is true that the ornamentation is bizarre, but Knighton does not do justice to the splendid proportions of the quadrant which forms the front of the building. It was opened as a school—*La Martinière*—in 1840. The name is derived from General Martine's motto '*Labore et Constantia*'.

<sup>1</sup> 'He left his house at Constantia to the public. Any European in want of change of air might go with his family and live there for a month, and beyond the month, unless another family wanted it. This would be a great convenience to the few English in Oudh, particularly to poor officers; so of course, for thirty years, the supreme court has been doubting whether the will meant what it said it meant, and the house has been going to decay; but it is now decided that people may live there, and it is all to be repaired.' (This refers to 1837.)—Emily Eden, *Up the Country*, i. 85.

When the General died, his furniture was sold by auction ; and the Company's agents purchased the chandeliers and lustres of Constantia to decorate the governor-general's palace in Calcutta. They got them a dead bargain, for the King of Oudh would not bid against the Company ; and the honourable Company was delighted with its commercial sagacity. No Yankee pedlar could have done the thing better.

When one has said that Constantia is vast and whimsical, all has been said about it that needs be said. Some part of the grounds reminded me of the gardens of Versailles, particularly a sheet of water in the form of a cross, with groves of clipped trees on either side ; but, on the whole, although it is apparent that vast sums have been spent to produce the result that one sees before him, yet that result is altogether *bizarre* and wanting in harmony.

The courts and fountains are European, the turrets and domes are essentially Asiatic in their character. The rooms have a certain European air about them, whilst the verandahs and the blinds are thoroughly Indian. Extent and incongruity are the characteristics of Constantia.

The mosques and bazaars at Lucknow do not differ so materially from those of other Oriental cities as to render any particular description of them necessary. The warlike air given to the latter by the armed men who constantly pass and repass in them is that which peculiarly distinguishes them. Men of rank are usually accompanied about the streets by their armed retainers, the more numerous in proportion to their station or wealth ; and it is by no means an unusual thing to witness fights between such bands in the narrow streets of the lower town. The shouts and warlike sounds which give notice to distant citizens of such encounters are sufficient to deter the more peaceful or the more timid from visiting the quarter whence they issue, whilst the turbulent or valorous are attracted to the neighbourhood by the clamour. Much blood is often thus shed—I say is, for the Indian newspapers assure me, in their monthly budgets, that Lucknow is still what it was

—the Lucknow of 1855 differing in no essential particular from that of 1835.

One peculiarity of the better class of houses in Lucknow I have not formerly mentioned—the fact of their having underground apartments,<sup>1</sup> to which the inhabitants retreat during the excessive heats of the hot season. Strange that men burrow in the earth to escape intense cold in one part of the world, and adopt exactly the same means to avoid intense heat in another. Extremes meet.

In the palace we had such an apartment, one sunk below the level of the surrounding court-yards; and to us, the Europeans of the Court, that apartment was intensely close, its atmosphere stifling and unpleasant. I would rather endure the extreme heat of the upper rooms, than the close, stifling, confined air of this refuge for 'the refuge of the world'. Fortunately we were not often called upon to occupy this lower apartment, for the king did not appear to like it. Indeed, the constant fanning which was carefully maintained around him when he was in the palace, would be sufficient to prevent the heat of the most suffocating day from telling much upon him. He only occupied the lower apartment occasionally, because it was the fashion of the nobility of Oudh so to do at particular seasons; and as those fashions from which he derived neither comfort nor amusement influenced him little, his annual burrowing was by no means long-continued.

Of the swarms of beggars which infest the streets and bazaars of Lucknow, and which may be regarded as one of its sights, other writers have said so much, that it is not necessary to dilate upon the matter here. Visitors to Italian cities are too much accustomed to such sights to make it a special peculiarity of Lucknow; and as all the world travels nowadays, 'doing' France, the Rhine, and Italy, in the shortest conceivable space of time, it is not necessary that I should enter particularly into the beggar-plague at Lucknow. Some have remarked that there were more old women amongst the beggars of Oudh than in any other part of the world; and I think there is some

<sup>1</sup> Known as 'tykhana'—*faikhana*.

foundation for the remark, although I cannot pretend to account for the fact.

Diseased, deformed, diminutive wretches of both sexes ; some young, some old and withered, some whining out their lamentations incessantly, others contenting themselves with occasional groans, are to be met with in almost every quarter of Lucknow ; and the habit of bestowing large sums in alms, when 'great' people move about, and at religious festivals and ceremonies, doubtless tends to encourage the trade and increase the numbers of idlers. If men can get anything in India without working for it, they will exhibit an amazing amount of patience in waiting ; the waiting faculty, in fact, is only fully developed near the tropics. There is a peculiarity, however, about Lucknow beggars, that would strike the European traveller, however well up in the continent, as strange. All the male beggars go armed ; some of them carrying their arms jauntily too, as if by no means ashamed of their profession, nay, rather glorying in it. 'The light of the sun has shone upon my lord's slave, and he will be fed,' says a bold impudent fellow with a huge moustache, a sword, and a shield, as he puts out his hand for an alms. You are the light of the sun that has shone upon him ; and the compliment, he thinks, is worth a labourer's day's pay. You turn from him in disgust ; and he then as quietly enlightens you as to his opinion of your female relations (your mother and your sisters particularly), in language too plain and energetic for translation—in language rather bold and expressive than elegant.

That this profession of beggary is by no means regarded as a thing to be ashamed of in Lucknow, is proved by the airs which the beggars give themselves, and the cool way in which they will settle how much such and such a noble ought to pay to their class now that his wife has given him a son and heir, or now that his daughter is to be married. They know the value of such ceremonies and festivals to a pice. I have heard of one beggar of distinction who had an elephant of his own, and daily went round the city on it collecting alms from his patrons.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MAN-EATER

A deserted street—Deaths—The man-eater loose—Burrhea—Manœuvring on both sides—A tiger-spring—Foiled—The man-eater victorious—Burrhea's successor—The wild buffaloes—Triumph of the man-eater—His fate.

I WAS driving in a buggy one morning through one of the finest streets of Lucknow. A friend accompanied me ; and we were proceeding from the vicinity of the Goomty to one of the king's palaces. The deserted condition of the streets as we advanced surprised us. There was no inhabitant to be seen for a considerable distance ; and where one was visible, he or she was hurriedly departing from the broad line of road on which I drove. So many strange things occur in a city exposed to the capricious tyranny of a man without any restraining principle, that we felt by no means that astonishment which any one fresh from England would have felt under the circumstances. Some execution, we whispered to each other, some fresh *example*—nothing more.

At length, in the middle of the road, we came upon a trampled bloody mass, bearing still some resemblance to a human figure. We stopped the buggy to inspect it. It was the corpse of a poor native female ; but terribly disfigured. The body was bruised and lacerated in all directions, the scanty drapery torn from the form ; the face had been crushed as if by teeth into a shapeless mass ; the long matted hair, which fell in bundles over the road, was all clotted with blood. It was altogether as disgusting a sight as one could well see anywhere. Apparently she was quite dead ; and we did not delay.

On we went ; still no sign of inhabitants—the houses everywhere closed—breathless terror reigning on all sides. It was not long before we came upon the figure of a youth,

similarly mangled and destroyed, lying also in the road, more towards the side, however. On the top of an adjoining house we saw one of the king's troopers standing, looking intently up the road along which we were advancing.

'What is the matter?' I asked.

'The man-eater is loose,' was the reply; 'wallah, but he has turned again. Look out for your safety, sahibs; he is wild to-day.'

I had heard of a savage horse belonging to one of the king's troopers that went by this name—*admeekanawallah*, the *man-eater*; because he had been the destruction of many men.

'He is coming, sahibs!' shouted the trooper from the house-top; 'take care, take care!'

Far along the road in front of us we could see the wild brute—a large bay entire horse he was, as we afterwards found—shaking a child whom he had seized as he held it in his mouth, shaking it savagely, but evidently coming towards us.

In another moment he had seen the vehicle, threw the child upon the road, dead no doubt, and rushed forward with savage fury to attack us. There was still a considerable space to be passed by him; but not a moment was to be lost. We turned rapidly round, our horse almost unmanageable from terror, flying over the ground; and away we went in a mad gallop down towards an enclosure with iron gates that we had passed a short time before. The man-eater pursued with hearty goodwill. We could hear his iron hoofs clattering over the road as he advanced.

We gained the enclosure—turned into it—my companion leaped from the buggy, and shut the gate. The whole was the action of a moment. It fortunately shut with a heavy bolt which fell into a socket; and just as the fall of the bolt secured our safety, the man-eater came tramping up. His head was covered with blood, his jaws steaming with recent slaughter, his cheeks horrid with coagulated gouts that had most probably spirted from his victims. There he stood, looking savagely after us through the iron railings, with cocked ears, distended nostrils and

glaring eye-balls—a ferocious-looking monster! Our horse trembled at the sound of his impatient snorting—trembled as if shivering with cold! The man-eater glared at us through the iron bars, and walked round to the side; but all was hard iron railing, substantial too. There was no entrance to be got. Satisfied that he was baffled, at length he turned round, rattled his iron heels against the bars, and then scampered, with head and tail erect and cocked ears, down the road, towards an archway which was built over it. Here several troopers were waiting for him. A noose was thrown skilfully over the uplifted head. He was upset, muzzled, and conducted to his stable. And the poor woman and youth and child? you ask. I heard nothing more of them. Doubtless their friends bore them off and buried them.

At dinner that day I took the liberty of mentioning the circumstance to his majesty.

‘I have often heard of that man-eater,’ said he; ‘he must be a furious beast.’

‘He is more savage than a tiger, your majesty.’

‘A tiger—good—he shall fight a tiger. We shall see what impression Burrhea will make on him.’

Burrhea was the name of a favourite tiger of the king’s, so called from a village at the foot of the Himalayas, near which he had been taken. The king would never allow him to fight with other tigers or with elephants; he was a pet, and was only allowed to enter into contests with such animals as he could easily vanquish.

It was on the following day, in the morning, before lunch, we were all assembled at Chaungunge in the gallery of a court-yard, about sixty yards square in extent—a court-yard with buildings all round, and a verandah below. Thick bamboo railing had been put up in front of the verandah, so as completely to encircle the court-yard, and to form a sort of enlarged cage. The man-eater had been enticed into the enclosure by means of a little mare—a *tattoo*, as the country horses are called—of trifling value.

The king and his usual suite of female attendants had

taken their places in the gallery, he on a sofa placed there for the purpose, they behind him. We stood on his majesty's right and left, leaning on the parapet or on the sofa. Every one commanded a full view of the court-yard, and the ladies seemed to relish the prospect as much as any one.

The order was given, and Burrhea's cage was brought into the verandah. A door in the bamboo-railing, prepared for the purpose, was drawn up, the cage-door was opened, and Burrhea bounded into the court-yard, lashing his sides with his long tail, and glaring furiously upon the man-eater and his little female friend. A more beautiful tiger than Burrhea it would not be easy to discover in all India. His glossy coat, regularly streaked, shone in the enclosure, in pleasant contrast with the frowsy covering of the little mare. Even the well-kept hide of the man-eater was sadly wanting in brilliancy when compared with the glittering skin of Burrhea.

The tiger had been kept without food or drink from the previous day to prepare him for the assault. He glared savagely at the horses as he entered, and commenced slowly stealing along towards them. The man-eater kept his eyes fixed on the eye-balls of his enemy. Not for an instant did he take them off; his head lowered, standing in an easy attitude, with one foot slightly advanced, he awaited the attack, moving as Burrhea moved, but always with the eyes intently fixed. As for the poor little mare, she was transfixed with fear—paralysed—apparently unable to take a thought for preservation. She stood cowering in a corner, awaiting her fate. With a slight bound Burrhea was upon the mare in an instant. A blow of his paw threw her over on the ground; his teeth were fastened in her neck, and he drank her blood greedily. It was simple butchery; for there was no resistance.

'It will make Burrhea only the more savage,' said the king, rubbing his hands gleefully. The European courtiers assented; and the female attendants, ignorant of the language, but certain that the king was pleased, were mightily pleased too. They exchanged glances of approba-



tion and of satisfaction ere they turned again to watch the proceedings in the court-yard.

Burrhea might have been from three to five minutes enjoying his draught of blood—not more—his head turned towards the man-eater all the time, and his eyes for the most part fixed on him. The man-eater, on his side, gave no indications of uneasiness. An impatient snort or two escaped him; that was all. With protruded neck and cocked ears, and glaring eyeballs, and twitching tail, he watched his enemy intently, still standing in an easy attitude of attention, as if prepared for immediate action.

At length Burrhea was satisfied, or else no more blood was forthcoming; and taking his claws out of the dead animal, and shaking himself as he did so, he began to go stealthily round the court-yard, like a cat stealing a march on a rat. He made no noise whatever. The large paws were placed one after the other upon the ground, the soft ball of the foot preventing any sound. Slowly were they raised and depressed; whilst the long back as slowly made its way forwards—now raised at the shoulders, now at the hind-quarters, as the legs were moved—the skin glancing backwards and forwards as if hardly belonging to the bones and muscles beneath it. It was not a scene to be forgotten: the king and his attendant females gazing intently above; the European courtiers straining with eyes and ears to catch every movement and every sound; the man-eater in the centre of the court-yard slowly turning as the tiger turned, his head and ears and neck ever the same; the tiger stealing along, so cat-like in aspect, and yet so gigantic in strength. Not a sound was audible but the grating of the man-eater's feet, as they were raised and lowered again—not a sound other; but all was mute expectation and anxious gazing.

At length the tiger bounded with the rapidity of lightning upon his enemy; the horse was fully prepared. It had evidently been Burrhea's intention to seize the head and fore-quarters; but the man-eater was too adroit for that; and, by a quick diving motion of his head and shoulders,

had received his antagonist upon his muscular haunches behind. The claws sank deeply into the flesh, whilst the hind-feet of the tiger made a grasp or two at the fore-legs of the horse ; but there was no time to secure his position. The man-eater lashed up with his iron heels into the air with tremendous vigour, and in a moment Burrhea was sprawling on the ground, not at all the better for his attack. We could hardly perceive, however, that he had been thrown upon his back—partly against the bamboo-railing, partly on the ground—when he was on his legs again, gyrating as before, moving stealthily round as if nothing had happened. With an indignant snort the man-eater resumed his former position, and awaited another spring, his muscular haunches bearing evidence in their lacerated skin, and in the gouts of blood which disfigured them, of the sharpness and strength of the tiger's claws.

' Burrhea will kill him yet ! ' exclaimed the king, turning to the nearest European.

' Undoubtedly, your majesty,' said the courtier.

Cat-like did Burrhea pace round and round again, his broad round head ever turned towards his wary antagonist. Each foot with its brawny paw was lifted and lowered again in succession, noiselessly as before, whilst the beautifully-streaked hide played over the bones and muscles freely. With distended nostrils and flashing eyes, the man-eater watched again as intently as ever, exactly in the same position as formerly—the head and neck lowered and protruded ; the ears cocked rigidly ; the eyes fixed in a glazing stare at the stealthily-gliding tiger ; and one fore-foot ever slightly advanced, to admit, doubtless, of that rapid diving and thrusting forward of the shoulder and head, by which he had formerly succeeded in getting his antagonist upon his hind-quarters.

For fully eight or ten minutes did this monotonous circling of Burrhea continue, the man-eater ever facing him and gazing intently, an angry snort now and then bursting from the horse as he turned. Burrhea opened his huge jaws widely at times, and licked up the drops of blood

which still clung to them ; and once (but once only) he paused for a moment over the dead mare, as if meditating a second draught. But the irresolution was only momentary, and the monotonous walk was continued.

At length the decisive moment arrived again. Burrhea was standing almost over the carcass of the dead mare, when he sprang once more—sprang so suddenly, that we in the gallery started at the sight, expecting it though we were ; and more than one of the attendants on the king gave forth a stifled exclamation of alarm. There was no premonitory growl, or display of any kind. It was as if by galvanic agency the tiger had been suddenly lifted into the air in the course of his monotonous gyration.

Man-eater was not taken by surprise, however. His head was ducked still lower than before ; his fore-quarters seemed to glide under the springing assailant ; and again were Burrhea's claws dug deeply into his haunches ; but further over on this occasion than on the former. The broad round head of the tiger projected for an instant beyond the tail of the horse, whilst his hind-claws were sunk deeply into the man-eater's breast. For an instant we saw him quivering unsteadily in that position, crouching with his belly on the horse's back, clinging to his prey for an instant, but only for an instant. Again did the ferocious stallion lash up with his hind-feet, almost as if he would throw himself over on his back. His iron heels came with crushing force against the jaw of Burrhea, and in a moment the tiger was sprawling helplessly upon the ground, once more stretched upon his back.

It was but for an instant, however, that Burrhea thus lay ; but, when he resumed his feet, and began running round the bamboo enclosure, it was quite apparent that it was no longer to attack again, but to escape. His jaw was broken ; and, with his tail between his legs, he cried out loudly with pain as he ran round, not unlike a whipped spaniel. The man-eater watched him, as before, intently, evidently fearful of a *ruse*, and finding it difficult to keep up with his rapid motion. But it was no *ruse* : Burrhea was looking eagerly

for some method of escape, crying almost piteously as he did so. 'His jaw is broken,' was whispered by some of the male servants below, who watched him from the verandah. The sound reached our gallery, and the king heard it.

'Burrhea's jaw is broken!' he exclaimed to us; 'shall we let him escape?'

'As your majesty pleases,' was our answer.

The signal was given—the door of the cage was opened, the bamboos opposite to it raised—and Burrhea rushed in to bury himself in the farthest corner.

Proudly did the man-eater snort and paw when he found himself thus victor. He first scampered up to the mare, and snuffed there a moment; and then, spurning her with his foot, with head aloft and tail arched, he trotted to one point and another of the bamboo railing, as if anxious to get at the attendant servants. His blood was up; and tigers or men, he did not mind which were his assailants now, or which he assailed.

'Let another tiger be set at him,' shouted the king to the natives, after he had watched him for a moment or two. 'Damn him; I will have my revenge for his destroying Burrhea;' the latter observation was addressed to us, the attendant Europeans, and was in English. We rubbed our hands, smiled, said it was most just, bowed, and awaited further sport.

'That was a terrible blow he struck with his hind legs,' said the king.

'It was a tremendous blow, your majesty. I heard it sounding on Burrhea's jaw-bone,' was the answer of one of our little company.

The keeper of the tigers here interposed. A message was brought to ask if he might venture into the presence of his majesty.

'Let him come,' was the kingly order.

The keeper of the tigers approached.

'May it please your majesty's greatness, but the tigers were all fed two hours ago,' said he; 'but the best we have, your majesty shall see in the court-yard in a moment.'

'And why were they fed two hours ago, you scoundrel?' asked the king.

'May it please the royal greatness of your majesty, but that was the ordinary time for feeding, and they are fed daily,' said the poor man, as he salaamed lowly, trembling in every limb.

'You shall go in to the man-eater yourself, you slave, if this tiger does not attack him.'

The tiger's cage was soon after in the verandah; and all eyes were turned eagerly towards it. The keeper of the tigers withdrew with no pleasant anticipations, be sure of it; for what the king said, he would think little of doing.

Wine, which had been ordered when Burrhea beat his retreat, was now brought; and the king pledged his guests in a brimming tumbler of iced claret. The drink was refreshing, because it was so cool; for the court-yard was oppressively hot, at least to us the Europeans of the party. As for the king, the attendant women fanned him, by gently waving around him the bushy fan formed of the peacock's tail. It was a pretty and a graceful sight to see the finely-turned arms, naked to the shoulder, with a jewelled bracelet or two on the wrist and above the elbow, waving about as the fans moved upwards and downwards, or from side to side—the fair fanners taking care not to interrupt the king's view as they gracefully put the air in motion.

The tiger's cage was brought, and placed in the verandah opposite the portion of the bamboo railing, which could be raised at pleasure. A passage was made, and a tiger came leisurely forth and surveyed the court-yard. He stood for a moment irresolute on the threshold, as if doubtful about advancing; but a spear's point, dexterously administered behind, left him doubtful no longer, and he scampered into the enclosure. The bamboo railing was let down; the door of the cage was shut again; and the tiger leisurely surveyed his intended antagonist. After gazing for a moment at the man-eater, who turned to face him, he went up to the dead mare, licked a drop or two of blood from the

neck, and then gazed at the man-eater again, who stood as before, on the defensive.

This tiger was somewhat larger than Burrhea, but not so beautifully streaked. There was something, too, more light and graceful about every movement of Burrhea. In fact, this fellow was evidently quite a plebeian, with huge muscular development and shuffling gait. Perhaps, however, he only wanted the stimulus of hunger to make him active and graceful as Burrhea had been.

The man-eater stood, as I have said, upon the defensive, at the side of the court-yard, opposite to that at which the tiger had entered. For his part, however, the tiger seemed to have a very incorrect idea of the reason why he was placed in his present position—he evidently did not understand what was expected of him; for, squatting down upon the mare, keeping his face like a cautious soldier to his doubtful friend the man-eater, he proceeded to tear up the dead animal leisurely, exhibiting a strength of claw, of limb, and of jaw, in doing so, that must have awakened uneasy sensations in the man-eater, if he reflected on his position at all.

‘Remove that carcass,’ shouted the king, annoyed; ‘fools that you were to leave it there!’

The order was obeyed forthwith. An iron rod or two, heated to redness, drove the tiger away. A noose was passed over the neck of the dead mare, and in a moment it was hoisted out of the arena. The tiger, evidently annoyed at the way in which he had been disturbed in his repast, stretched himself at full length in the middle of the court-yard, licked his lips, and growled at the men in the verandah, looking now at them and now at the man-eater, who still stood prepared for the contest as before.

It was not easy to reach the tiger where he lay. A few ineffectual efforts were made to rouse him with the hot rods; but they were too short. At length, a spear of portentous dimensions was introduced, and he was struck with it. He bounded to his feet, seized the spear, ran along its length to the bamboo railing, and there tugged valorously at one

of the bamboo rails. This was too dangerous a sport to allow him to indulge in, and he was soon dislodged, and sent howling away with the hot irons. He scampered once or twice round the enclosure, man-eater eyeing him intently all the while, and facing him still as he turned in every direction. All the efforts of the attendants were unsuccessful, however, in getting him to assail the horse. He was burnt, and speared, and enraged; but vented his rage on the bamboos, and showed his glittering teeth to the men; nothing could induce him, apparently, to attack the man-eater, whilst, on his part, man-eater seemed to have no disposition at all to attack him.

It was an evident palpable failure, and I began to dread that the poor keeper of the tigers would certainly be introduced into the court-yard; but the king had forgotten all about his threat, and shouted out that man-eater was a brave fellow, that they should remove the tiger, and see what the horse could do with three wild buffaloes.

There is, perhaps, no animal so fierce and terrible as the wild buffalo, when thoroughly roused—heavy, clumsy, and awkward though he be. I have frequently seen him put a good-sized elephant to flight, goring the fugitive terribly.

The cage-door was opened, the bamboos were lifted, and the tiger bounded into his den with infinitely more alacrity than he had shown in getting out of it. There was a pause of a few minutes—the wine circulated in the gallery again—and three uncouth-looking, unwieldy buffaloes were driven into the enclosure beneath, one by one.

With that peculiarly stupid gaze of theirs, their huge heads moving unmeaningly from side to side, they pushed their way on into the middle of the court-yard.

The man-eater retreated as they advanced. Their huge forms disconcerted him not a little. Even the appearance of the second tiger, after his deadly encounter with the first, had moved him less than the apparition of these uncouth monsters, with their broad flat foreheads, their wide-branching horns, and the ample black rotundities of their figures.

He retreated step by step, snorting as he did so ; but more with apprehension than with anger. Like all bullies, he would have rushed headlong at them had he seen any signs of fear ; but their evident want of all terror of him was plainly the cause of his embarrassment.

Huddled confusedly together, the three black brutes thrust their heads to one side and the other in idiotic gaze ; now snuffing vainly at the ground, now watching the attendants in the verandah, now contemplating the pillars of the gallery, and anon inspecting the redoubted man-eater, as if vainly asking by their gaze what possible good could be attained by having them there. As to attacking the horse, the idea evidently never entered their heads. He, however, took courage as he saw them irresolute and uncertain. Pawing the ground first, then snuffing at them with distended nostrils, then advancing a step, then snorting with doubt, he slowly came nearer, step by step, almost inch by inch—they, on their part, paying no heed to his movements, but still crowding together, and tossing their heads about in an eminently asinine way.

Step by step, I say, did the man-eater advance. At length his head almost touched the protruding side of the nearest buffalo. He snorted and sniffed, and smelt vigorously as he stretched out his long neck towards the unwieldy brute ; the buffalo, for his part, heeding him but little, or not at all. Familiarity breeds contempt, says the old proverb, and certainly it did so in this instance ; for, after snorting and sniffing, and smelling at his ease, advancing the while a step or two nearer, man-eater wheeled suddenly round, lashed up furiously behind, and rattled his iron hoofs in gallant style against the ribs of the meditating buffalo. The attack was so sudden, so utterly unlooked for, and so violent withal, that the buffalo was stunned for a moment ; his companions shaking their heads in chorus, as if opining that there was something in that.

The king laughed outrageously as he gazed at their confusion.

‘The man-eater deserves his life,’ he shouted out ; ‘let



him escape.' The order was obeyed forthwith: he was adroitly muzzled, and led forth to his stable, a victor and a conqueror, to end his days in peaceful glory.

'I shall have an iron cage made for him,' exclaimed the king; 'and he shall be taken care of. By my father's head, but he is a brave fellow.'

He *had* an iron cage made for him—one twice the size of many modern London dining-rooms; and there, roaming round the walls of his iron house, man-cater exhibited his teeth to admiring visitors, snapped at them valorously, and often showed how he had assaulted the ribs of the buffalo, by playing the same tune on the bars of his cage.

When I left Lucknow, the man-cater was still one of its sights.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the horse that Mrs. Parks refers to in 1831: 'A fight was to have taken place between a country horse and two tigers, but Lady William Bentinck broke up the party and retired. I was anxious to see the animal, he is such a vicious beast; the other day he killed two tigers that were turned loose upon him.'—*Wanderings in Search of the Picturesque*, i. 178.

'In Lucknow, while visiting the king's stables, I was witness to a most melancholy spectacle to the lover of the thorough-bred racer. A beautiful bay English blood-horse, which I heard had been presented by George IV to a former king of Oude, was blinded with clothes, and fastened on each side of his headstall with strong chains; for such was his vice, that he was not to be approached without due precaution. . . . On the accession of the late king, whose honourable economy was well known, this poor creature was turned loose into a courtyard, with a hungry royal Bengal tiger. The battle was of considerable duration: but the event proved the power and spirit of the horse, who kicked the tiger to death, after his own bowels had been torn out and trailed on the ground. Thus the keep of two animals was saved to the Court of Oude, and the King's majesty rejoiced thereat.'—Davidson, C. J. C., *Diary of Travels and Adventures in Upper India*, 1843, ii. 107-9.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CAPRICE OF DESPOTISM

Rajah Buktawir Singh—The refectory—Royal wit—Buktawir's ill-advised pleasantry—Arrest—Sentence of death—The Rajah's family—Public disgrace—Interference of the Resident—The iron cage—Food riots—The bazaar—A friend in need—Restoration.

OF the various native officers of his court, there was, perhaps, none with whom the king was more familiar than Rajah Buktawir Singh,<sup>1</sup> nominally a general in his majesty's forces. I say *nominally* a general; because the chief military force in Oudh—the only force in the country indeed really formidable—belonged to the Company, and was under the orders of the resident. Still, the king had his regiments of horse and foot soldiers, clothed and accoutred partly after the Persian fashion, partly after that of the honourable Company. Of these forces there were probably forty or fifty thousand, cavalry, infantry, and artillery; and of these the nawab's son was the commander-in-chief, and Buktawir Singh was 'the General'. In our parties and entertainments at court, Buktawir was usually addressed

<sup>1</sup> The events related in this chapter occurred to Raja Ghalib Jang not to Raja Bakhtawar Singh (v. Appendix, pp. 126 sqq.). Raja Bakhtawar Singh, son of Purandhar Ram, a Pathak Brahman, was originally a trooper in the Company's service. He attracted the attention of Nawab Sa'adat Ali, who bought him out, and made him a Ressaldar in his own service. By Ghaziu-d-din he was created a Raja, and Muhammad Ali Shah conferred on him the title of Premier Raja of Oudh. A younger brother Darshan Singh, with his sons Ragbir Dayal Singh and Man Singh, are notorious as powerful and unscrupulous Amils. 'For some forty years the family was the most powerful in Oudh, and something like half the province was, with occasional breaks, in the hands of one or other of its members as Nazim.' Raja Bakhtawar Singh accompanied Colonel Sleeman on his tour through Oudh in 1849. H. C. Irwin, *Garden of India*, pp. 137-40; Sleeman's *Tour*, passim. P. Carnegy, *A Historical Sketch of Fyzabad Tehsil*, passim.

as 'the General'—seldom by his name. So fond was the king of practical joking and boyish pranks—in which Buktawir, on the one side, and the barber on the other, were zealous proficient—that a spectator, casually introduced, might very probably have supposed the court a school of overgrown children, temporarily released from restraint. Buffoonery of the most silly and ridiculous character was constantly promoted by his majesty's example, and entered into with hearty goodwill by Buktawir Singh amongst the native, and the barber amongst the European, attendants.

Yet Buktawir was by no means a man of despicable ability. He was proud of his position at court, and determined to retain it as long as possible. Hence his compliance with the frivolities of his sovereign ; and, with oriental duplicity, he entered into these frivolities as if with his whole heart. There were sound sense and practical experience of life in the man, however, beneath this outer coating of absurdity. He was respected by the natives as a man who knew how to rule, and who understood, too, the difficulties of his position. 'The General' he was called ; but, had he been styled chief officer of police, the title would have been more applicable ; for his troops performed little other duty than those similar to what we are accustomed to see performed by police in England—little other except that attendance upon processions and court pageants which forms so large a portion of the out-of-doors life of an Eastern court.

It will be readily understood, therefore, that Buktawir was a man of high consideration amongst the native community. His wealth, the authority of his family as one of the heads of the Rajpoots, his intimacy with the king, his office—all conspired to render him a man of note, of influence, and of power. The nawab, or prime minister, was a little envious of the consideration he enjoyed ; but as long as Buktawir was the favoured of the king and the barber, he had little to fear from the envy of the nominal prime minister. They professed, of course, to be the best of friends. Buktawir and the nawab embraced and praised each other salaamed, and uttered high-sounding terms of

adulation and courtesy, with all that attention to etiquette for which the natives of Hindustan are remarkable ; and yet the nawab was a Mussulman, and ' the General ' a Hindu.

We had been witnessing some sport in one of the king's numerous country palaces in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. Wearied with the monotony of animals tearing each other to pieces, and of victories gained by bloodthirsty wild beasts, we had retired to a small refectory which adjoined that portion of the park in which we happened to be at the time. Iced claret and a biscuit or two were pleasant and refreshing after the labour of gazing at renewed combats. The king was in great vein, and joked and joked again with unbounded hilarity ; Buktawir, as usual, accommodating himself readily to the royal humour, laughing at witless sallies, and professing to enjoy hilariously the lively boisterousness of ' majesty '.

At length it became time to leave the refectory, as the hour for lunch drew near, although still early in the day. The attendant *suzerars* or retinue were called ; the captain of the body-guard mustered them in the usual order, and information was brought that all was ready. The king rose from the table—he was dressed in his favourite European costume—thrust his right hand into his hat, and, elevating it on his arm, allowed it to swing round on his thumb as he held it aloft. Everything was as usual, no signs of a storm brewing in any quarter ; we had so left the refectory, there and elsewhere, often before. It was a habit of his majesty, when pleased, to swing his black European hat round on his raised hand, the hand being thrust into it, and thus supporting it. I was only a few paces from him as he walked forwards ; Buktawir was near me. We were all rising to gain the door after the king, without order or ceremony ; for so he willed it in these friendly meetings.

At length, as the king still twirled his hat, advancing—there being a pause in the conversation—he contrived to thrust his thumb out through the top of his hat. Like other hats, it had probably been made rather to sell than for wear—although his majesty was somewhat particular

to have everything of the best ; or, having been frequently subjected to the same rough usage before, the top had become injured. However it was, certain it is that he turned to us with his thumb stuck out at the top, laughing as he did so, and expecting us, of course, to laugh too ; which also, of course, we, like obedient courtiers, dutifully did. Buktawir cried out forthwith, in Hindustani—the *double entendre* being equally apt in both languages :

‘ There’s a hole in your majesty’s crown.’

It was evidently said impulsively, without premeditation, as a piece of wit ; but unfortunately the efforts of the king’s father and family to exclude him from the throne,<sup>1</sup> in order to raise thereto his brother,<sup>2</sup> had made his majesty excessively sensitive of any remark upon his crown. Had it not been for the Company and the resident, he would never have worn it. Yet at another time, and in a different mood, the observation might have passed unnoticed.

The king’s face became changed as he heard the remark. The joyous hilarity of a moment before vanished at once, and a dark frown brooded over his countenance. His keen black eyes shone fiercely as he turned round to me—I happened to be the nearest to him at the moment—

‘ Did you hear the traitor ? ’ he asked, in a voice husky with rage ; for his rage swelled, like his hilarity, in sudden gusts.

‘ I did, your majesty,’ was the beginning of my reply ; but before I could utter any more, he had shouted out to the captain of the bodyguard :

‘ Take that man into custody forthwith. Go, Rooshun <sup>3</sup> ’ (to the prime minister), ‘ and take off his head.’

It was a moment of appalling consternation. The king had absolute power of life and death over all the natives not in the service of the Company—absolute, unquestioned power ; and such was his disposition, that

<sup>1</sup> Nasiru-d-din was for a time imprisoned by Ghaziu-d-din Haider under the influence of the minister Agha Mir.

<sup>2</sup> Ghaziu-d-din’s brother ? Nasiru-d-din had no brothers.

<sup>3</sup> Rooshanu-d-daulah—the minister also alluded to as the nawab.

any attempt to thwart his rage then would but have rendered it more violent and deadly. The captain of the bodyguard—a European officer—and the prime minister, both advanced to Buktawir, who stood with bent head, and hands extended before him palm to palm, in the ordinary attitude of obedience. He said not a word.

'The commands of the "refuge of the world" shall be obeyed,' said the prime minister, who, although apparently on the most friendly terms with Buktawir, was evidently not displeased at his office. The rise and fall of men in courts, ruled by a capricious despot, are too sudden to cause much surprise in the breasts of those accustomed to such courts.

'Buktawir is my prisoner,' said the captain, leading him off, and giving us, his European associates, a meaning look as he went out—a look that said, 'Perform your part; I shall perform mine for the wretched man.'

The king dashed down his hat on the ground, and stamped on it as Buktawir was led out, his anger still raging fiercely; for all that I have described was, of course, but the work of a moment.

'What would the king of England do to the man who insulted him thus?' he asked, again turning to me, with a countenance horrible from the working of rage. He stamped as he asked the question.

'His majesty would have him arrested as your majesty has done,' was my reply; 'and after trial he would be dealt with as was decided.'

'So shall I do!' he exclaimed, continuing his advance towards the door slowly, and quite forgetful that the order had already been given for his execution.

'I shall inform Rooshun of your majesty's commands,' said I, bowing as I passed him.

They were already in the saddle; Buktawir between two of the horse-soldiers, and the captain in advance, whilst the nawab rode behind the troop. I informed him of what the king had said; and Rooshun did not thank

me for the information, in his heart, although his reply was, that he had trusted in the clemency of 'the refuge of the world'. There were many attendants near enough to hear; and the reply was intended as much for their ears as for mine. As for Buktawir, he too must have heard and understood what I said; for it was in Hindustani, and loud enough for him to hear; but he did not so much as by turning his head indicate that he had heard it. Such caution men learn in courts.

'Buktawir shall certainly die—no power on earth shall prevent him dying; his head shall be cut off before it is dark,' said the king to his friend the barber, as he ascended his elephant. No one ventured to say he should not. We, however, the European portion of his majesty's suite, knew full well that if the resident could be got to interfere, the unfortunate man's life was certainly safe, whatever might become of his property.

From the park in which this scene had occurred to the Goomty was but a distance of a few miles. The floating bridge, a huge flat-bottomed boat, or rather raft, with protecting sides, received us, elephants, horses, and all, just as we were; and in a few minutes we were landed on the Lucknow side of the river. This floating-bridge was reserved for the special use of his majesty and suite, and was always ready at one side or other of the river to receive its accustomed burden. An awkward primitive sort of contrivance it was; but then it was *exclusive*, and that tended much to make it prized and respected. For ordinary people there was the bridge of boats; the vulgar but far more convenient means of transit from shore to shore, save in the middle of the day for an hour or two, when the central portion of it was opened, in order to permit the river-traffic to be carried on.

Arrived at the palace, his majesty seemed to be more reasonable and less excited. We were all anxious to know his intentions with respect to Buktawir Singh. The subject was delicately introduced as we stood leave-taking, in a friendly way, by an influential courtier.

'He shall not die,' said the king, 'until a regular investigation has been made into the matter.'

With this assurance we were fain to be content ; although it was not without fear and trembling for the consequences that we left the king to his native attendants. There was a large fortune to be confiscated, and to be divided amongst them. They were ever ready to counsel death and confiscation when the object was rich or powerful. The captain of the bodyguard was deputed as the most proper person to inform the resident of the matter ; but that gentleman did not well see how he could interfere—it was an alleged case of treason by a native in no way subordinate to the Company ; he, the resident, had no excuse for interfering whatever.

As we left the palace, those of us belonging to the king's household visited the unfortunate Buktawir. He was thrust into a mean outhouse, formerly in the occupation of a servant of low caste, in the neighbourhood of the palace. Here he was guarded by two native sentries. The place itself, to him, a man of the highest rank and caste, was degradation and punishment enough ; but, when we entered, the condition of the miserable victim of caprice was lamentable to witness.

The only furniture the place contained was a rough native bed, such as is used by native servants, called a *charpoy*, that is, a framework of rough wood raised on four short legs, and with coir cords passed from side to side above to support a mat or mattress. No mat or mattress was here, however. Everything was done according to the king's order, we heard, communicated to the captain of the bodyguard by the nawab. All the garments of the disgraced chief had been removed—his richly-ornamented turban, his magnificent Oriental dress, his tulwar or sword, his pistols, his Cashmere scarf, used as a belt—all had been removed. With a scanty cloth tied round his loins—a cloth such as the lowest of the labouring classes wear—he was lying, when we entered, on this uncomfortable couch, otherwise naked.



'What I said,' said he, as we spoke to him, 'was said in utter unconsciousness, in foolish playfulness. The king knows I never intrigued against him when his father and his family conspired to deprive him of his crown. I shall die, gentlemen; I know I shall die; Rooshun is not my friend; but, oh, good Englishmen, preserve my family from disgrace. Surely, his excellency the resident will protect them, if you ask him. I am a man—I can bear torture and death; but my wives and children—my aged bed-ridden father—my wives, that have never seen the face of man save of their relations—my children, who are all of tender years—what will become of them when I am gone? Good gentlemen, promise me to say a kind word for them.'

We gave him all the assurances we could. There was something poetical about his language—in the energy of his sorrow and excitement. The whole scene was a touching one; and, surrounded though we were by the dark purlieus of a native court, with all their horrid traditions of cruelty and bloodshed, tears from the eyes of more than one of us coursed down our cheeks as we listened to the wretched man.

'I have preserved this one jewel,' said he; 'they have taken all the rest.' It was a signet-ring containing a large emerald of great value, which he usually wore on his finger. He put it into the hands of the most influential member of our little party. 'Should my family come to want—should they only lose their property, and be otherwise uninjured—perhaps you will sell this for them. Do, good Englishmen; but, oh, try and save them from the torture and disgrace; and the blessing of the widows and the orphans will be yours.'

Our interview was not a prolonged one. We reassured him as much as we could—promised our interference to the utmost. We left him calm and resigned. As to his own life, he never for a moment thought it would be saved; for he had heard the order given for his execution, and he attributed the delay simply to an intention of inflicting torture upon him. He had made up his mind to this. 'He

knew the king better than we did,' said he, as he shook his head mournfully. He had seen the most excruciating tortures inflicted upon men for less than he had done.

The promised investigation was to be held in the evening. We were to dine as usual with his majesty afterwards. Till then we took our way to our several homes, full of sad thoughts at the spectacle we had witnessed, at the scenes which had occurred that morning.

As we assembled in the ante-room of the palace that evening, the captain of the bodyguard met us, and told us of what the resident had said. 'God only knows what will be the result of all this—would to heaven I were in any other position than that I now fill!' he exclaimed vehemently; 'the poor old bed-ridden father of Buktawir, his wives and children too, have all been arrested, and thrust into the same degrading prisons.' A native *peon* informed us that it would be half an hour before his majesty was ready to receive us. 'Let us visit the family together,' said we in a breath; 'we can give them consolation; the resident will surely protect them.' It was no idle curiosity, but a mission of mercy, that took us to the court-yard where the wretched family were imprisoned.

I have witnessed many heart-rending spectacles in the course of a long and somewhat varied experience; but I have no recollection of any other which affected me more deeply or painfully than the sight of this unfortunate collection of women and children. They were all treated as Buktawir had been treated—stripped of their fine clothes and their ornaments—given only the same scanty covering that he had been allowed; there they were, cowering like sheep and lambs awaiting the slaughter—the old bed-ridden father, with his wrinkled skin and spare frame, through which the skeleton could be clearly distinguished, as the bones protruded in all quarters; and he was weeping, weeping not for his own sufferings or dishonour, but for the woes of his son and of his son's wives. Young, delicately-moulded women, who had been nursed in every luxury, and brought up tenderly, whose faces had never been

exposed before to the eyes of men, there they cowered, huddled together, with their children, exposed to the rude gaze and brutal jests of the native soldiery who were scattered about the court-yard. One clasped her infant to her breast, and seemed to find some satisfaction in all her woe in fulfilling a mother's duties. Another sat in silent misery, with downcast face and drooping form, a Hindu Niobe. No sculptor could have imagined forms of more exquisite mould than two of them presented ; whilst their colour was that brunette tint which captivates so much when contrasted with the jet-black locks of hair common to the regions of the sun. They had unloosed their dark tresses, that these emblems of sorrow might form some sort of covering for their shoulders ; and they looked all the more lovely in consequence.

When they heard that we had come as comforters, and friends of Buktawir, the cowering fear which had formerly possessed them gave way to passionate entreaty and fervent expressions of thanks. The women and children threw themselves at our feet, and begged our intercession for the doomed culprit. It was pitiable to see them grovelling on the ground before us in all the agony of fear, and in all the abasement of commingled fear and love. It was not for themselves they sought protection and succour, but for him whose incautious words had brought them into that miserable position. Truly, if Hindustan is ever saved, it will be by the virtues of its women ; for more honourable, more honest-minded, more nobly-endowed female humanity is not to be found in the most highly-civilized regions of the earth than amongst the zenanas of India. Europeans usually see the low and the vile only, and they judge them all by those ; just as if a foreigner were to form his estimate of the women of England from those he sees crowding the streets of its large towns in gaudy colours and brazen boldness when the light of day has gone, and the brilliant flickering of gas-light has taken its place.

We promised, we reassured, we calmed, we comforted these sorrowing creatures, old and young. We had ground

for consolation ; for the resident had sent for the nawab, and had declared that whatever Buktawir might be guilty of, his family was innocent ; and that there must not be any wholesale slaughter or indiscriminate torturing. The Company might permit the king to slay here and there ; but the murder of a whole family in cold blood, the torture of unoffending women and children in groups, was more than they would permit. It might come to the ears of Europe ; and then what a pretty piece of business it would be for the honourable Company and its governments in India !

We had not long to remain with the family of Buktawir. The king would be furious did he find us missing, and learn that we had been comforting the traitor and his brood. We hurried from the court-yard, more disposed than ever to exert ourselves in behalf of the doomed general.

The interference of the resident in behalf of his family was probably the saving of Buktawir Singh's life. The nawab was thoroughly frightened when the great sahib himself informed him that he and the Company should hold him (Rooshun) responsible for anything that befell the innocent family of the condemned rajah. It did not suit either the convenience of the prime minister or the prospects of the European barber to be brought into collision with the resident ; and, at the council held that evening, every voice was loudly or earnestly raised for clemency.

'Let it be so, then,' said the king, wearied of the matter ; 'let the traitor escape with life. Let his property, however, be confiscated, and let him be kept in a cage in perpetual imprisonment, banished from Lucknow.'

Such was the sentence ; and the nawab was to see to its execution. A Mussulman chief, from the north of Oudh, was to set off on the morrow, in returning to his own district. It was decided that Buktawir should go with him as his prisoner. But this was not enough.

'He must be disgraced,' said the king, 'as rajah never was disgraced before. Let his turban and his dress be brought—his sword and his pistols.'

All was done as the king ordered. According to Hindu ideas, an indignity offered to the turban is the same as if offered to the owner and ordinary wearer of it. A *mehter*, or servant of the lowest class and rank—a sort of house-scavenger—was ordered into the presence; and there and then, in presence of us all, defiled the unconscious turban with hearty good-will, to the king's great satisfaction. With hearty good-will, I say, did the *mehter* perform his part of the degradation; for, once defiled, none but himself would touch the turban or the clothes. They became from that moment his own property; and, when dried, doubtless ornamented on gala-days afterwards himself and his wife.

Next came the sword. It was broken into a hundred pieces by a sturdy blacksmith introduced for the purpose. The pistols came next. The son of Vulcan was about to smash them with his weighty hammer, when he thought of looking to see if they were loaded. They were loaded. He paused. The king observed the action, and suspected the cause.

'Are they loaded?' he asked vehemently.

'May the "refuge of the world" look benevolently on his slave—the pistols are loaded,' was the blacksmith's reply.

'Yah, Hyder! but said I not well the man was a traitor of the worst stamp? how say you, gentlemen, now!' exclaimed his majesty, turning to us, 'was this an unpremeditated matter? You hear—the scoundrel's pistols are loaded?'

'It was but his duty as a general to have his pistols loaded to defend your majesty,' said the tutor firmly.

'Ha! say you so? then, by Allah, I shall see if others think that a part of his duty. Let the captain of the body-guard be called. I want him instantly.'

The life of the unfortunate man hung again in the balance, to be decided by the slightest breath of air. We were cautioned not to intimate by look or sound anything to the captain as he entered. We knew that he wished

well to Buktawir, as we did ; and yet a word from him might now be the means of bringing down destruction on the accused ! The captain entered, advancing towards the king with the usual salaam.

' Captain ——,' said the king, ' was it the duty of Rajah Buktawir Singh, that was—but rajah and singh no longer—to wear his pistols loaded or unloaded ? '

A life hung most probably on the answer. We awaited it in breathless expectation. But the scene had been sufficient to inform the captain of the circumstances of the case : the waiting blacksmith, the king's earnest manner, the pistols deposited on the table, our anxious countenances—and he gave his reply without hesitation.

' It is unquestionably the duty of the commander-in-chief and the general of your majesty's forces to be prepared for any sudden danger that might assail your majesty. Their pistols would be useless unloaded.'

' Let them be fired off and broken up, and then scattered to the winds,' said the king, seeing that he was foiled again.

That evening the dinner passed as usual. The viands were criticized, the wine circulated, exactly as on other evenings ; no one seemed to think for a moment of the unhappy family that awaited in one of the adjoining courtyards the sentence of banishment and imprisonment. The circumstance was not even once alluded to in the course of the entertainment. As for the king, he quaffed his champagne, and watched the amusements, with his usual hilarity ; his conscience seemed quite at rest, his remarks were full of attempted wit, of boyish extravagance, of frivolity, or worse, as on other evenings.

The next morning the resident himself visited the wretched family of Buktawir Singh, assuring them of his interest in the case, and his determination to shield them from further disgrace. They blessed ' the great sahib ', as grateful women and children only can bless ; his visit was balm to their souls, an assurance that they were not utterly deserted.

The very same day Buktawir Singh and his family

departed as prisoners in the train of the northern rajah. The alleged culprit himself was put into a large wild-beast cage, and otherwise somewhat hardly and harshly dealt with ; but his family was more tenderly treated. The resident's interference had done wonders with the natives of all classes. Rich and poor, princes and sepoy, fear the *Koompanny Bahador* (the Honourable Company), and the resident, as its representative. To them this *Koompanny Bahador* is a terrible myth, that awes and terrifies. Amongst the very ignorant in India, it is no uncommon impression that the *Koompanny* is a frightful monster of portentous power and energy, dwelling in a far-off land, but able to see all that takes place in India ; whether god, man, angel, or devil, they cannot say, but something awful and frightful unquestionably.

Buktawir Singh was gone, and we heard no more about him, save that his relatives amply provided for his wants ; and that the chief in whose care he was, found it his interest to treat him well. It is probable that, like most wealthy natives, he had large sums of money so secured and concealed, that when his property was confiscated, these remained untouched. Certain it is, that although Rooshun had been diligent enough in the confiscation, yet whatever Buktawir wanted, he had money to procure ; whatever little piece of bribery was to be done, either in the king's retinue or in that of the resident, ample funds were forthcoming for the purpose.

That year—for I may as well bring Buktawir's story to a conclusion at once—that year there was a general dearth in Oudh. The scarcity of rice caused prices to go up considerably above the average, not of that alone, the staple of native food, but of all other kinds of food. Discontent was the consequence, and there were troubles in Lucknow. The bazaar-owners were loudly accused by the poor of having produced an artificial scarcity, and riots occurred in consequence. When the king made his appearance in public, petitions against the speculators were thrown into his *howdah*, or offered to him when he was on horseback by

kneeling sufferers. It was annoying—these petitions became a bore—and he made his appearance but seldom in the city.

A year had rolled away since the disgrace of Buktawir Singh, and still quietness was not restored; the petitions were still presented; his majesty was still bored to death with long-winded accounts of starving families and outraged property.

'There is evidently something wrong,' said the king at length one day, at the durbar; 'I never saw this discontent continue so long in Lucknow before.'

The nawab hinted something about the crops.

'Bah, Rooshun, old woman that you are, don't talk of the crops to me,' quoth his majesty; 'I tell you there's something wrong. The later crops have been excellent. What do you think about it, master?'

'I think, your majesty, that there must be some mismanagement in the bazaars that requires looking into,' said the tutor.

'Wallah, but I agree with you, master; let us go this very evening and inquire into it. Let us all go in disguise, as the caliph used to do in Bagdad. I will go too; it will be both useful and agreeable.'

The king had said it. He had got the idea thoroughly into his head, and nothing would turn him from it. Go into the bazaars we must in disguise, majesty and all. What we should do when we got there, or how effect any good, was never thought of. The king was soon ready, equipped as a common European; Rooshun was soon similarly transformed. Two of the European members of the household dressed themselves in like manner. The others were to lounge about the bazaar in the neighbourhood of the king, but not to appear to be of his party. The nawab and the captain of the bodyguard both took measures against any surprise or sudden violence. The king's own family would be the first to seize the opportunity, did they discover the disguise; and there was no knowing but desperadoes might be sent to pick a quarrel with, and to



murder him. To prevent any such tragical occurrence, both the nawab and the captain of the guard, unknown to each other, ordered sepoy and attendants, well armed, to follow, in the ordinary dress of Lucknow. Where all men went armed, their being so would not excite suspicion.

It must not be supposed that so many entering the bazaars, and keeping within a short distance of each other, would be likely to cause remark. So crowded are the Eastern bazaars in the evening, that one must push his way along. They are always full; and the roads being narrow, many people might easily traverse them together, without the fact of their being together awakening observation.

On we went through the oily steaming crowd, redolent of unsavoury odours. Fierce Rajpoots and Patans, with their tulwars and shields jingling by their sides and on their backs, elbowed us and scowled. Well-bearded Mussulmans, pious and devout, observed, as we passed, it was no place for sahibs. Sleek Hindus smiled, and tempted us with their wares, flattering us in affected humility with their words. At length we drew near a money-changer's, where there was more room. His coins lay scattered in little heaps over the large trays that served as tables. His portly figure was squatted in greasy sleekness in the midst. He sat on his bended legs, after the manner of money-changers in the East, and tailors in the West. Two sturdy attendants lounged at a little distance, sufficiently far from the coins to prevent their helping themselves, sufficiently near to watch them and protect.

A merchant of some consequence, judging by his dress, approached the money-changer, and exchanged greetings. They salaamed with cordiality.

'Another attack on the rice-stores this morning, Mhadub,' said the new-comer.

'Bad times, bad times,' said Mhadub, shaking his head gloomily, as he looked towards our party, now advancing, to see if we needed his services. The king looked significantly round as he heard the remark and the reply; he would hear more, so he stopped at a neighbouring stall, as

if to look at a native purchasing some *pawun*.<sup>1</sup> We went a little farther on and examined some swords.

'It's very hard that a merchant can't sell his goods at what he likes, without being in danger of getting his property destroyed,' observed the new-comer again.

'Very hard, very hard, indeed; it wasn't so in times past,' said the money-changer, shaking his head again; 'there's nothing doing now. Change for a gold mohur? Certainly, my lord. Fifteen rupees, eleven annas, and four pie—four annas, eight pie *dustoor*; <sup>2</sup> some people charge five annas, but I only four and eight pie. Bad times, bad times, as you say, Baboo.'

'It wasn't so when Rajah Buktawir was the king's minister; he kept the bazaars in order,' said the Baboo.

The king started. He listened attentively, however, still, and advanced nearer to examine some brass drinking-cups.

'He did, Baboo, he did,' replied the money-changer; 'Rajah Buktawir kept the bazaar in order, as you say—bad times, bad times.'

The Baboo passed on; he had said his say. I thought at the moment, and to this day I still think, he was sent there on purpose to say it—that some friend or relative of Buktawir's, hearing of the king's procedure, had taken this means of reminding his majesty of the disgraced general.

The king returned to the palace ruminating deeply. A new idea had been put into his head; and, like all men who totally want originality, he caught firm hold of it, and kept it there. He thought only of Buktawir Singh, and what he had heard in the bazaar.

Two months after that, Rajah Buktawir Singh was in his old place at court, resuming his duties and reinstated in his honours as if nothing had occurred. The next harvest was abundant; and when I left Lucknow, Rajah Buktawir was still 'the General', as before—in great favour with the king, nay, in greater favour than ever.

<sup>1</sup> A leaf with spices and a kind of lime rolled in it, used for chewing by the natives, as sailors chew tobacco. [W. K.] *Pān*.

<sup>2</sup> *Dastur* = custom: *dasturi* = the customary commission.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

## COLONEL SLEEMAN'S ACCOUNT

RAJA GHALIB JANG<sup>1</sup> was the superintendent of the City Police, and commandant of a brigade of infantry, and a prime favourite of the king, Nusseer-od-deen Hyder, for two years, up to November 1835. He had many other employments, was always in attendance upon the king, and was much liked by him, because he saw his orders carried into immediate effect, without any regard to the rank or sufferings of the person whom they were to affect. For these two years he was one of the most intimate companions of his sovereign in his festivities and most private debaucheries. He became cordially detested throughout the city for his reckless severity, and still more throughout the court for the fearless manner in which he spoke to the king of the malversation and peculation of the minister and all the court favourites who were not in his interest. He thwarted the imbecile old minister Roshun-ood-dowlah in everything; and never lost an opportunity of turning him into ridicule, and showing his contempt for him.

Ghalib Jang was the person, or one of the persons, through whom the king invited females, noted for either their beauty or accomplishments, and he was told to buy a celebrated dancing girl, named Mogaree. She did not appear, and the king became impatient, and at last asked Dhuneca Mehree the reason. She had often been employed in a similar office, and was jealous of Ghalib Jang's rivalry. She told his majesty that he had obstructed his pleasures on this as on many other occasions, and taken the lady into his own keeping. All the other favourites told him the same thing, and it is generally believed the charge was true; indeed the girl herself afterwards confessed it. The king, however, 'bided his time', in the hope of finding some other ground of revenging himself upon the favourite, without the necessity of making him appear in public as his rival.

On October 7, 1835, the king was conversing with Ghalib Jang in one of his private apartments on affairs of state. Several crowns stood on the table for the king's inspection.

<sup>1</sup> Darshan Kurmi was enrolled by Sa'adat Ali Khan in his regiment known as Shaitan ki Pultan (the Devil's Regiment): he became a colonel, was given the titles of Raja by Ghaziu-d-din and Ghalib Jang (victorious in war) by Nasiru-d-din.

They had been prepared under Mucka, the tailor's, inspection, from materials purchased by him. He always charged the king ten times the price of the articles which he was ordered to provide, and Ghalib Jang thought the occasion favourable to expose his misconduct to his master. He took up one of the crowns, put his left hand into it, and, turning it round on his finger, pointed out the flimsy nature of the materials with which it had been made. His left finger (*sic*) slipped through the silk on the crown, whether accidentally, or designedly, to prove the flimsy nature of the silk and exasperate the king, is not known; but on seeing the finger pass through the crown, his majesty left the room without saying a word. Soon after several attendants came in, surrounded Ghalib Jang and commanded him to remain till further orders. In this state they remained about two hours, when other attendants came in, struck off his turban on the floor, and had it kicked out of the room by sweepers.

They then dragged out Ghalib Jang, and thrust him into prison. The next day heavy iron fetters were put upon his legs and upon those of his principal followers, who were imprisoned along with him, and his mother, father, wife, and daughters were made prisoners in their own houses; and all the property of the family that could be found was confiscated. On the third day, while still in irons, Ghalib Jang and his three followers were tied up and flogged severely, to make them point out any hidden treasure that they might have. That night the king got drunk, and, before many persons, ordered the minister to have Ghalib Jang's right hand and nose cut off forthwith. The minister, who prayed forgiveness and forbearance, was abused and again commanded, but again entreated his majesty to pause, and prayed for a private audience. It was granted and the minister told his majesty that the British Government would probably interpose if the order were carried into effect.

The king then retired to rest, but the next morning had Ghalib Jang and his three followers again tied up and flogged. Six or seven days after, all Ghalib Jang's attendants were taken from him, and no person was permitted to enter the room where he lay in irons, and he could in consequence get neither food nor drink of any kind. On October 19 the king ordered all the females of Ghalib Jang's family to be brought on foot from their houses to the palace by force, and publicly declared that they should all on the next day have their hair shaved off, be stripped naked, and in that state turned out into the street. After giving these orders the king went to bed, and the females were all

brought, as ordered, to the palace ; but the sympathies of the king's own servants were excited by the sufferings of the unoffending females, and they disobeyed the order for their being made to walk through the streets, and brought them in covered litters.

The resident, apprehending that these poor females might be further disgraced, and Ghalib Jang starved to death, determined to interpose, and demanded an interview while the king was still in bed. The king was sorely vexed and sent the minister to the resident to request that he would not give himself the trouble to come, if the object was to relieve Ghalib Jang's family, as he would forthwith order the females to be taken to their homes. The minister had not been to the resident for ten or twelve days. He prayed that the resident would not speak harshly to the king on the subject of the treatment Ghalib Jang and his family had received, lest he, the minister, should suffer himself. The resident insisted upon an audience. He found the king sullen and doggedly silent. The minister was present and spoke for his master. He denied what was known to be true, that the prisoner had been kept for two days and two nights without food or drink ; but admitted that he had been tied up and flogged severely, and that the females of the family were still there, but he promised to send them back. He said that it was necessary to confiscate the property of the prisoner since he owed large sums to the state. The females were all sent back to their houses, and Ghalib Jang was permitted to have four of his servants in attendance upon him.

The resident reported all these things to Government, who entirely approved of his proceedings ; and desired that he would tell his majesty that such savage and atrocious proceedings would ruin his reputation, and, if persisted in, bring on consequences most injurious to himself. . . .

Rajah Dursun Singh,<sup>1</sup> the great revenue contractor, and at that time the most powerful of the king's subjects beyond the precincts of the court, had, like the minister himself, often been thwarted by Ghalib Jang when in power ; and, after the interposition of the resident, he applied to have him put into his power. The king and minister were pleased at the thought of making their victim suffer beyond the immediate supervision of a vigilant resident, and the minister made him over to the Rajah for a *consideration*, it is said, of three lacs of rupees ; and at the same time

<sup>1</sup> This Raja Darshan Singh was the brother of Raja Bakhtawar Singh whom Knighton confuses with Darshan Singh, Ghalib Jang.

assured the resident that this was the only safe way to rescue him from the further vengeance of an exasperated king; that Rajah Dursun Singh was a friend of his, and would provide him and his family and attendants with ample accommodation and comfort. The Rajah had him put into an iron cage, and sent to his fort at Shahgunge, where, report says, he had snakes and scorpions put into the cage to torment and destroy him, but that Ghalib Jang had a 'charmed life' and escaped their poison.

'On the death of Nuseer-ood-deen Hyder, Ghalib Jang was released from confinement, on the payment, it is said, of four lacs of rupees, in Government securities, and a promise of three lacs more if restored to office. He went to reside at Cawnpore, in British territory; but, on the dismissal of the minister Roshun-ood-Dowlah, three months after, and the appointment of Hakeem Mehndee to his place, Ghalib Jang was restored to his place.'

*Journey through Oude, i. 155-60.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE KING'S HAREM

Female sepoye—The Begum's revolt—Female bearers—Slaves—Mrs. Meer Haasan Ali's account—Eunuchs—The rooms of the harem—Seclusion of its inmates—Ignorance of nature—Dress—Amusements—The Padshah Begum's procession—Silver-sticks, troops, the kettle-drums.

We of the rougher sex never had an opportunity of seeing the interior of the harem, or witnessing the private life of its inmates. Notwithstanding this, however, we had accurate information enough on the subject. European ladies were allowed to visit the king's wives; the eunuchs, a privileged class, were accustomed to intrude without ceremony upon the privacy of the native ladies, and these eunuchs were constantly to be met with about the court. We were not left therefore to conjecture—much was hidden we were sure—but much also was patent to us, made fully intelligible and plain to us by the reports we heard from others.

Of the living curiosities of the palace there were none the account of which will appear more strange to European ears than the female sepoye.<sup>1</sup> I had seen these men-like women pacing up and down before the various entrances to the female apartments for many days before I was informed of their real character. I regarded them simply as a diminutive race of soldiers, with well-wadded coats. There was nothing but their height and this fulness of the

<sup>1</sup> 'The old begam was the great lady, and in her palace were we received. It was a most amazing sight, as I had never witnessed the interior of a zenana before, and so many women assembled at once I had never beheld. I suppose from first to last we saw some thousands. Women-bearers carried our tanjans; a regiment of female gold and silver sticks, dressed in male costume, were drawn up before the entrance.'—Mrs. Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, l. 87.

chest to distinguish many of them from other sepoys; and one is so accustomed to see soldiers in England with coats stuffed so as to make their wearers resemble pouter pigeons, that I took little heed of the circumstance.

These women retained their long hair, which they tied up in a knot upon the top of the head, and there it was concealed by the usual shako. They bore the ordinary accoutrements of sepoys in India—a musket and bayonet, cross-belts and cartridge-boxes, jackets, and white duck continuations, which might be seen anywhere in Bengal. Intended solely for duty in the palace as guardians of the harem, they were paraded only in the court-yards, where I have seen them going through their exercise just like other sepoys. They were drilled by one of the native officers of the king's army, and appeared quite familiar with marching and wheeling, with presenting, loading, and firing muskets, with the fixing and unfixing of bayonets—in fact, with all the ordinary detail of the barrack-yard. Whether they could have gone through the same manœuvres in the field with thousands of moustachoeed sepoys around them, I cannot tell—probably not. They had their own corporals and sergeants; none of them, I believe, attained a higher rank than that of sergeant.

Many of them were married women, obliged to quit the ranks for a month or two at a time occasionally. They retained their places, however, as long as possible; and it was not until the fact of their being women was pointed out to me, that I perceived their figures were not always in the proportions allotted to the other sex. I have seen many a sergeant in England, however, whose figure was just as *outré* as those amongst them farthest advanced in pregnancy. Their appearance was a frequent subject of merriment with the king, who usually ended his *badinage* of them, however, by ordering some present to be given to the delinquent—delinquent, properly so called, for there was an express order against such disfigurement, clothed in the plainest language, and of the most absolute character, posted up in their barracks.



Of these female sepoys there were in all two companies, of the usual strength, or weakness, if the reader will have it so. Once during my residence at Lucknow they were employed by the king against his own mother. I have mentioned elsewhere, that when Nussir's father, Ghazi-udeen, had resolved that Nussir should not succeed him, he had determined on getting his son into his own power, that, if need were, the youth might be put to death rather than mount the throne. His mother, the Begum,<sup>1</sup> had then fought for him with all the bravery of a hero. She had armed her retainers, incited them by her example, and ultimately succeeded in baffling the king; but not until after a bloody contest had taken place, and the resident had been obliged to interfere to prevent further scandal. One would suppose that Nussir would never forget the gratitude due to his heroic mother for her defence of him when he was incapable of defending himself. But as Ghazi had wished to act towards Nussir, so did Nussir wish to act towards his own son. The mother of Nussir took her grandson under her protection, and refused to give him up. The king then ordered her to leave the palace she occupied, and go to another. She suspected his intentions, and refused. Orders and threats would not do—the Begum was not to be intimidated. The king then sent his female sepoys to turn her out; but her retainers fought with and routed them. The balls firing on either side were whistling over my house at the time, and two or three penetrated at the windows. It was not until I found there was actual danger that I inquired what was the cause of disturbance, and prepared to leave my abode. Such was the state of things in Lucknow, that a few people killed, a few volleys of musketry fired in anger, were scarcely sufficient to rouse our curiosity. Fifteen or sixteen of the Begum's attendants were killed in this attack.

<sup>1</sup> The Padshah Begam was the adoptive mother of Nasiru-d-din; his own mother died shortly after his birth, poisoned, it was rumoured by the Padshah Begam. Sleeman, *Journey, etc.*, ii. 173. Hastings, *Private Journal*, ii. 284 n.

The end of the matter was, that the resident again interfered. The king promised not to molest his mother the Begum, or to touch his infant son, if she would remove to the palace he indicated. The resident thereupon guaranteed the life of the child, and the Begum departed content. She put more faith in the word of the English gentleman than she would have put in the solemn oaths of the king and all his ministers! Truly it is not in Europe that one discovers the greatness of England, or the magic power that resides in the name of Englishman.

Notwithstanding the zeal of the old Begum and her maternal heroism, however, the infant boy did not succeed his father. Nussir adopted the fatal expedient of pronouncing him illegitimate, by public proclamation<sup>1</sup>; nay, even affixed royal notices to that effect on the gates of Lucknow; and the Indian Government decided that, so stigmatised, the youth could not succeed. When Nussir was poisoned, shortly after the barber was driven out of Lucknow, the old Begum tried force again.<sup>2</sup> She had the residency surrounded with her troops, and the youthful son of Nussir proclaimed. The resident, however, was not to be intimidated. Although in imminent danger of losing his life, he refused to recognize the prince. Orders were sent down to the cantonments for troops. The troops came—a few discharges of grapeshot amongst the threatening crowd dispersed them—and one of the old uncles, whom Nussir had treated so badly, succeeded to the vacant throne. The old Begum and her youthful son, now a young man, are still alive in Lucknow,<sup>3</sup> I believe. Her object had been

<sup>1</sup> The king repudiated Farid-un-Bakht, commonly known as Muna Jan, in 1827 and again in 1832. Both Muntazimu-d-daulah (Hakim Mehdi) and Jagudin Husain informed Colonel Low that 'All the world knows that Fureed on Bakht is the son of Mir Fazl Ali'.—Letter from Major Low dated January 25, 1832, *Oudh Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> v. Introduction, p. xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Both the Padshah Begam and Muna Jan died in custody at Chunar. Knighton apparently meant to write 'youthful grandson'. The Padshah Begam was a daughter of Mubasshir Khan II, a Najumi (astrologer) of Delhi.

a good one, and she had twice succeeded by force. In other times and under other circumstances, that old Begum might have written her name largely on the pages of the world's history. All honour to her for her bravery and her heroism; all honour to the English resident too, Colonel Lowe, whose firmness and intrepidity put an end to what threatened to be a very serious disturbance. The evils resulting from the suppression of the *émeute* were as nothing compared with what would have resulted from its success.

But I have been digressing in all this. I was led into the digression by the female sepoys.

Another class of attendants at the palace peculiar to Lucknow, were the female *bearers*,<sup>1</sup>—labourers we should call them, perhaps. Their occupation was to carry the palanquins, and various covered conveyances of the king and his ladies into the inner courts of the harem. These female bearers were also under military discipline. They had their officers, commissioned and non-commissioned. The head of them, a great masculine woman, of pleasing countenance, was an especial favourite with the king. The *badinage* which was exchanged between them was of the freest possible character—not fit for ears polite of course; but the extraordinary point in it was, that no one hearing it, or witnessing such scenes, could have supposed it possible that a king and a slave stood before him as the two tongue-combatants. This very chief of the female bearers, I have since heard from one who was in Lucknow at the time, was the poisoner of Nussir—bribed thereto by some member of the royal family.

Of the slaves in attendance upon the ladies of the harem, there were great numbers, some hereditary, some newly purchased from poor parents, either on account of physical beauty, or from some peculiar talent which they possessed of singing, story-telling, sham-pooing agreeably, or such like.

That discarded ladies were often made away with in the palace, as in Constantinople of old, I have not the slightest

<sup>1</sup> A Hindustani, not an English word. [W. K.]

doubt ; and these slaves, or the eunuchs, were usually the instruments, I was told. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali<sup>1</sup> is able to tell more about these attendants on the harem than I can. They are not found in the court alone, but in every family of distinction in Lucknow.

'The female slaves, although constantly required about the lady's person, are nevertheless tenderly treated, and have every proper indulgence afforded them. They discharge in rotation the required duties of their stations, and appear as much the objects of the lady's care as any other people in her establishment. Slavery with them is without severity ; and in the existing state of Mussulman society, they declare women-slaves to be necessary appendages to their rank and respectability. The liberal proprietors of female slaves give them suitable matches in marriage when they have arrived at a proper age, and even foster their children with the greatest care ; often granting them a salary, and sometimes their freedom, if required to make them happy. Indeed, generally speaking, the slaves in a Mussulman's house must be vicious and unworthy, who are not considered members of the family.' So much for the good lady's idea of slavery in Mussulman families generally. Listen now to an anecdote of slave-life in Lucknow, told with all that suggestive simplicity which usually characterizes female authorship. The man who would say as much in plain language would shock the modesty of nervous ladies.

'I have heard of a very beautiful female slave who had been fostered by a native lady of high rank from her infancy. In the course of time, this female slave had arrived to the honour of being made the companion of her young master, and still, with the lady's consent, resided with her. Her

<sup>1</sup> In her *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali was an English lady, who married a Lucknow noble during a visit he paid to England. She spent twelve years with him in India, and did not allow him to exercise a Moslem's privilege of a plurality of wives. Returning to England afterwards, on account of her health, she did not again rejoin him. Her book is dedicated 'with permission' to the Princess Augusta. [W. K.]

mistress, indeed, was much attached to her. The freedom of intercourse, *occasioned by the slave's exaltation*, had the effect of lessening the young creature's former respect for her still kind mistress, to whom she evinced some ungrateful returns for the many indulgences she had received at her hands. The exact nature of her offences I never heard; but it was deemed requisite, for the sake of example, in a house where some hundreds of female slaves were maintained, that the lady should adopt some such method of testifying her displeasure towards this pretty favourite as would be consistent with *her present elevated station*. A stout silver chain was therefore made by the lady's orders, and with this the slave was linked to her bedstead a certain number of hours every day, in the view of the whole congregated family of slaves. This punishment would be felt as a degradation by the slave; not the confinement to her bedstead, however, where she would perhaps have seated herself from choice, had she not been in disgrace, but the chaining in presence of the household.'

The European lady has evidently shown the brightest side of the picture—the darker shadows were perhaps concealed from her eyes. When the slave was ugly and repulsive, instead of being 'young' and 'pretty,' young masters would not be likely to care what kind or amount of punishment was inflicted on them; and all Mussulman ladies are by no means of the angelic temperament of the mistress of the slave in the foregoing anecdote. Jealousy and spite together, there can be little doubt, will lead sometimes to cruelty and revenge, even when the object of the jealousy is, like the favoured slave in Mrs. Hassan Ali's narrative, 'very beautiful;' nay, even simple anger, when roused in the naturally cruel, will lead to more inhuman treatment than can well be described in plain words. It is not more than eight years ago, for instance, since all Calcutta was roused from its tropical torpor into a state of violent indignation against a Mohammedan lady. Her slave—for slaves there are, in reality, if not in name, in Calcutta itself—her slave had not heated her hookah

properly with the charcoal-burners called *ghools*.<sup>1</sup> She had repeatedly so offended. The lady was very wroth. At length, infuriated by anger, she had the unhappy wretch thrown upon the ground and held there by other slaves—by other ‘servants of the zenanah,’ the law called them. Whilst thus prostrate, a number of burning *ghools*, properly heated (that is, balls of red hot charcoal), were thrown over the poor creature, and she was shockingly burnt, so shockingly, that even the indignation of some fellow slave was roused. The girl died a few days afterwards. The police were informed of the circumstance. The lady was tried as a purdah lady, condemned, and sentenced to transportation for life. She was then obliged to show her hitherto-concealed countenance; and the reporters of the newspapers were at a loss to give a correct account of her beauty in words. It was something exquisite.

I am free to confess, however, that I heard of many fewer cases of cruelty in the treatment of slaves during my residence in Lucknow than one would suppose probable, considering my intimacy with the native nobility. Floggings and disgraceful punishments there were for slaves of both sexes; but not to anything like the extent prevalent in America, if Mrs. Stowe’s pictures of life in the model republic are to be considered genuine and accurate. Whether it was that I felt an antipathy to the class, or was prejudiced against them by the accounts I heard, I cannot now tell; but my impression is, that the greater part of the cruelty practised in the native harems, is to be attributed to the influence and suggestions of the eunuchs. They were usually the inflictors of punishment on the delinquents; and this punishment, whether flogging or torturing, they seemed to inflict with a certain degree of *gusto* and appetite for the employment.

These eunuchs, like the female slaves, are to be found in great numbers in the houses of the Mussulman nobility of Lucknow. There could not have been less than a hundred and fifty of them about the palace; and the chief eunuch—

<sup>1</sup> *Gul*.

the principal attendant on the first wife of the king, the Padshah<sup>1</sup> Begum, a daughter of the King of Delhi<sup>2</sup>—was a man of great influence and importance in Oudh. They are usually children stolen for the purpose in Upper India, by those who sell them to the nobles, and are often much in the confidence of the masters whom they serve. 'They enjoy many privileges denied to other classes of slaves, and are admitted at all hours and seasons to the zenanahs,' says Mrs. Hassan Ali. 'They were the usual bath-attendants of the ladies of the harem at court, being preferred for that service to the female slaves.'

Many of these unfortunate beings have been advanced to high offices of trust under the Oudh government,<sup>3</sup> farming the revenues, for instance, in large districts, and undertaking the management and conduct of important negotiations. Bishop Heber tells a story of one of them,

<sup>1</sup> Mussulman sovereigns take the title of Padshah, or Padishah (protector-ruler). The first wife is therefore the Padshah Begum. [W. K.] In the reign of Nasiru-d-din Haider this title was always applied to the queen-dowager, widow of Ghaziu-d-din.

<sup>2</sup> Sultana Bos, Nasiru-d-din's principal wife, was the daughter of Mirza Muhammad Suleimān Shāko, the younger son of the Emperor Shah Alam. Her uncle was the Emperor (or 'King of Delhi') Akbar Shah II.

<sup>3</sup> The eunuch Almas Ali Khan 'was the greatest and best man of any note that Oude has produced. He held for about forty years this (Miyanganj) and other districts, yielding to the Oude government a revenue of about 80 lacs of rupees. During all this time he kept the people secure in life and property, and as happy as people in such a state of society can be; and the whole country under his charge was, during his life-time, a garden. . . . Almas Ali Khān, at the close of his life, was supposed to have accumulated immense wealth; but when he died he was found to have nothing, to the great mortification of his sovereign, who seized upon all. Large sums of money had been lent by him to the European merchants at Lucknow, as well as to the native merchants all over the country. When he found his end approaching, he called for all their bonds and destroyed them. . . . His immense wealth he had expended in useful works, liberal hospitality, and charity'.—Sleeman, *Journey through Oude*, i. 320. He flourished in the time of Asafu-d-daulah and his successor. Other notable eunuchs were Bahar Ali Khan and Jauhar Ali Khan, who managed the affairs and estates of the Fyzabad Begams—mother and widow of Shujau-d-daulah.

who, being visited by his sovereign, built him a throne of a million of rupees—a hundred thousand pounds sterling—and afterwards made him a present of it.<sup>1</sup>

As the slave, by Mohammedan law, is the absolute property of his master, all the wealth he may acquire is also his master's; so that whatever sums these eunuchs may accumulate during their lives reverts to their owners on their death. Hence the valuable dresses and jewels heaped upon all classes of slaves, eunuch and other, by their lords. This wealth is but a deposit, lent for the time being to the wearer; for the slave has no heirs, and no legal power to bestow. An instance did once occur, I was told, of a rich eunuch who had long farmed the revenue of a considerable district, and who willed his property away on his death.<sup>2</sup> The appointed heirs lost no time in taking possession of the palace of the deceased eunuch, with all that it contained; but no sooner did the court become aware of the circumstance, than the sovereign claimed the entire property as his by right. Troops were marched against the offending heirs; the retainers of the parties in possession fought valiantly in defence; and it was not until after a severe contest that the palace was surrendered to the king. By a slight application of torture, such of the hordes of gold and silver as remained were discovered, and were all seized by the court; in all which the strict letter of the law was but adhered to. Indeed, the people of Oudh are so accustomed to contests of this kind, that, like the Tipperary boys, they rather like a good row. It prevents their arms becoming rusty for want of use.

But we have been long enough detained by the exterior of the harem and its attendant sepoy, bearers, and eunuchs. Let us boldly lift the curtain, and pass into the interior to inspect it. The ladies, I am sure, will accompany me.

The form of the buildings of the harem does not greatly differ from that of the accessible parts of the palace. The

<sup>1</sup> *Narrative*, &c., vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> v. Mrs. Moor Hassan Ali's account of the eunuch Afrin Khan. *Observations*, ed. 1917, p. 40.



ordinary oriental model of a house is indeed a square or oblong court-yard, with rooms opening into verandahs surrounding it. If the house consist of two stories, then a gallery runs round the enclosure above, into which the upper rooms open. The apartments are usually raised two or three steps above the level of the court-yard, and consist for the most part of long bare-looking halls, at the end of which small closets are often found, guarded by doors. These closets usually contain valuables of various kinds: dresses, jewellery, expensive ornaments, and such like. It may seem strange to European ears; but doors and windows are usually wanting to these halls, their places being supplied by curtains and apertures. These curtains are called *purdahs*,<sup>1</sup> and hence the common expression in India a *purdah-woman*—that is, one concealed from public gaze—who lives in retirement, seen only by her nearest male relatives, and who travels in shut-up conveyances, often so thickly covered as to prevent the poor prisoner within from seeing anything without. It is from the male portion of the world only that she is thus shut out—with the female of all classes and races she may have unrestricted intercourse.

If one of these *purdah-women*, Hindu or Mussulman, gives evidence in a Company's court, she remains shut up in her palanquin even when within the court of justice. A servant, or near relative, swears to the identity of the lady within; and she is so examined, never once seen by judge or magistrate, by the accused or the accuser. Seated in her dark box, tailor-fashion, she answers the questions put to her; the voice is heard, but the mouth which utters the voice is not seen. Of course this system leads to great abuse, but it is absurd to blame the Indian Government on that account; native customs require the concealment, and native customs are far less easily interfered with than people may suppose.

The court-yard is much used by the ladies of the harem as a place of reception in fine weather. A temporary cloth

<sup>1</sup> *Parda*.

covering is often stretched over it, and the ground matted. The chief lady sits on her *musnud*, or throne, in the centre, and there receives her visitors, who salaam as they enter. She rises only to the very aged, or to those of higher rank than herself, or to her male relatives. The lords of the creation are truly lords in the East—too often tyrants too. The ladies regard them as a superior order of beings, listen to their words as the child in Europe listens to those of its parents, adopt their views and embrace their opinions with an unhesitating confidence, that bespeaks childlike simplicity and implicit faith. Does some indignant Englishwoman mutter ‘impossible!’ or ‘they pretend only’, as she reads this? Let her fancy herself born, brought up, educated, amongst a nation of heathens, who consider the birth of a female child as a positive misfortune, and the birth of a male child as a proportionably great blessing, and she will have no difficulty in believing my words to be literally true, however lamentable she may regard the fact.

The pleasant prospect of nature is, of course, quite shut out from these cheerful, contented captives. They have never enjoyed a glimpse of a pleasing, extensive landscape. Many of them have never even seen a garden or a river, a grove of trees, or an open field. ‘These flowers are beautiful, very beautiful; how pretty must not the ground be where they grow in great numbers!’ is an exclamation which a European lady heard from them frequently. ‘They will often ask with wonder,’ she remarks again, ‘“how do these things grow? How do they look in the ground?”’<sup>1</sup>

When receiving her visitors within the halls, the chief lady sits nearly in the centre of the apartment on her *musnud* or throne, which is placed, if possible, near a pillar. None other is allowed a *musnud* but her. It consists of a large cushion, covered with gold cloth, or embroidered silk, or velvet, and is placed upon a carpet about two yards square. The rank of the lady is usually indicated by the structure and appearance of the carpet and the *musnud*. In the royal harem, the former was composed of cloth-of-gold,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations*, 1832 [ed. 1917, p. 177]. [W. K.]

with a deeply-embroidered fringe. Two smaller cushions are also placed upon the larger to support the knees, as the lady sits cross-legged.

To be invited to a seat upon the musnud indicates equality in the visitor, or profound respect in the hostess. Should the visitor be of very superior station, or the hostess anxious to show her the highest possible form of respect, she resigns her cushions altogether, which the visitor occupies. A seat even upon the carpet is an honour; how much more, then, the resignation of the musnud itself!

Large lustres and chandeliers were common in the royal harem, although not generally used in the zenanas in India. They were introduced by Nussir-u-deen. His father, Ghazi-u-deen, although fond enough of accumulating such articles of luxury, reserved them all for his own reception rooms, or for the Emanbarra.

Each of the king's wives had, of course, her own harem, her own musnud, her own reception-rooms and halls. She might not see her husband once in a month—perhaps not anything like so often; yet was she still a wife and queen. Perfectly aware though they were, one and all, of course, of the relation in which their female attendants too often stood to his majesty, yet I have been assured that this seldom troubled them. The slave might be the favoured mistress, and the queen the neglected wife; but still each maintained her own station and position within the harem; nor would the king himself have sanctioned any interference with their customary relations.

We had the fullest opportunities of seeing the dresses of the superior order of court-ladies; not on those only who attended his majesty at dinner, and who were always splendidly dressed, being generally young women of great personal attractions. We *could* see them, and *did* see them, of course; but, by a happy royal fiction, as good as most legal fictions, they were supposed to be *purdah-ladies* still; and to have fixed our eyes upon them would have been considered rude and disrespectful. Not only had we an opportunity of seeing the native female dress of the superior

orders on them, I say, but it was a common joke with his majesty, on coming from the bath, to exchange dresses with his favourite wife or mistress for the time being, and to appear before us in that attire; nay, he has done so in the evening, behind the gauze curtain which stretched across the end of the dining-hall, and issued thence dressed as a Begum or queen.

The materials of the dress might vary much, and the method of wearing it slightly; but the articles were always the same, and the form appeared to be stereotyped. The *pyjamas*, or wide trousers, of satin, or cloth-of-gold, or washing-silk, fell loosely over the instep, where they were sometimes gathered and tied, and sometimes extended like a train behind, gathered in front. They were confined by a broad ribbon of gold or silver tissue at the waist, the ends of which hung down before, terminating in rich tassels which reached below the knee. Jewels and pearls were common ornaments of these tassels. The pyjamas themselves were much fuller below the knee than above—gradually, indeed, becoming less and less full, until at the waist they fitted, and were evidently intended to fit, closely to the figure.

The bodice, which covered the upper portion of the person, and was worn beneath the other garments, was usually of some thin semi-transparent cloth—gauze, or net, or fine muslin—the more transparent in texture apparently the more fashionable. It is, in fact, the universal covering of the women in India; and great care is taken to fit it closely to the figure—a single wrinkle or perceptible seam in it is a defect. Those worn in the royal harem were usually ornamented round the neck with gold bangles or embroidery.

Over the bodice was thrown the *courtee*,<sup>1</sup> or shirt, usually of thread-net. The courtee fell over, but did not conceal, the rich ornaments of the waistband of the pyjamas, and was itself adorned with gold or silver ribbons, used as a trimming upon the seams and hems.

The cloak, called *deputtah*,<sup>2</sup> or *chudder*,<sup>3</sup>—thrown over

<sup>1</sup> *Kurti*.

<sup>2</sup> *Dopettā*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chadar*.

these lighter articles of underclothing, and worn equally within and without the house—consisted of gold or silver gauze tissues, and resembled in form nothing so much as a small English bedsheet, rather long for its breadth. The fine muslins of Dacca are much valued and prized to form those cloaks; and no trouble or expense is spared in embroidering them, and ornamenting them with rich bullion fringes. Thrown over the back part of the head, and falling gracefully on the shoulders, the deputtah, by its arrangement, may be made to give dignity and elegance to a figure in itself wanting in both; whilst, on the naturally dignified and elegant, its folds enhance, to an extraordinary degree, the grace of the wearer. Standing, it was crossed in front, one end of it falling down over the figure, which is partially screened, whilst the other was thrown over the opposite shoulder; but when the wearer was seated, the deputtah was collected in large folds round the lower part of the figure and upon the lap—sometimes, indeed, being thrown altogether off the shoulders. This latter, however, was regarded by elderly ladies as arrant coquetry, and as being hardly proper.

Fancy a graceful young woman so clothed, of a brunette tint, with pointed shoes upon her naked feet, the soles and nails of which, as well as the palms and nails of her hands, are stained of a rose colour. The large languishing black eyes are made still more captivating by the pencilled line of black drawn over the edges of the eyelids. The eyebrow has been carefully nurtured and tended, that no stray hair break the regularity of its semi-circular sweep. The smooth high forehead and oval countenance are thrown forward prominently by the jet-black glossy hair—smelling of the sweet jessamine oil—which has been taken off the face, and hangs in twisted folds down the back. The ears are ornamented round their edges with a variety of rings, and a large ring hangs from the cartilage of the nose—a large ring bearing a ruby between two pearls. Fancy such a figure standing before you, in all the elegant gracefulness of unrestrained and unconstrained developments—the upper portion of

the form half hidden, half revealed by its gauze-like coverings, the lower concealed by the brilliant-coloured pyjamas—and you have the picture of a fine lady of the court of Oudh—the reigning favourite, it may be.

It was not often that the Begums of the court went through Lucknow in formal procession. If a holy place was to be visited, however, or some act of devotion to be performed at a distant mosque, in the hope of obtaining the greatest of all blessings in their eyes, a male child, the pomp and circumstance with which the lady moved abroad were imposing enough. Before the Padshah Begum alone could the kettle drums,<sup>1</sup> as I have before remarked, be carried. She had the privilege too of the embroidered umbrella, the sun-symbol or *aftadah*,<sup>2</sup> and the peacock's feather fans. In other respects, however, the procession was much the same with all.

Let us take a glance at the Padshah Begum and her retinue, as she repairs to the holy Durgah<sup>2</sup> to pray there. A portion of the king's bodyguard, in their glittering livery of blue and silver, comes first—their band playing and their colours unfurled. Then two battalions of infantry draw near, also with their bands and colours. A company of spearmen, with long silvered spears, succeeds, their white dresses and uniforms contrasting pleasantly with the crimson-jacketed foot-soldiers. A party of men, also with white dresses, comes next in order, each bearing a small triangular crimson flag with the royal arms emblazoned. The covered conveyance in which the lady herself is borne follows the flags; it is, in fact, a small room, silvered on the outside, and borne along by poles, supported by twenty bearers. Every quarter of a mile these bearers are changed.

<sup>1</sup> The *danks* (kettle drums), *chatts* (umbrella), and *aftabgir* (*aftadah*), are all symbols of royalty. For *aftadah* see reference on p. 186. See Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, ed. 1917, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Dargah*, 'sacred threshold or door-place.' The Dargah of Hazrat Abbas Ali is the shrine built to contain the metal crest from the banner of that saint. Hither the banners which are carried with the 'tazias' are brought to be consecrated at Moharrum (v. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, p. 32 *seq.*).

They are dressed in white cloth, fitting close to the person, with loose scarlet overcoats, edged with gold embroidery. Their turbans are also crimson, with a gilt fish in front, from which a gold tassel depends, that rests upon the shoulder. The women bearers come next in the order of the procession. Their duty is to relieve the men when the conveyance reaches the palace or the exterior of the Durgah. Gold and silver sticks in waiting follow them in great numbers, loudly vociferating the name and titles of the lady within, and whose duty it is also to keep the beggars at a distance ; for the beggars of Lucknow are an importunate class, not easily daunted by the most resolute refusal ; besides, during such a journey, it is customary to scatter coin amongst them, and they congregate in immense numbers to receive it.

Behind the gold and silver sticks rides the chief of the eunuchs upon his elephant—an officer of considerable authority and importance, as I have already stated. On such occasions he was usually expensively dressed in a suit of gold cloth, a suitable turban, and rich Cashmere shawls—altogether an imposing-looking puppet.

A host of covered conveyances, of all kinds, follow the eunuch, containing the ladies of the Padshah Begum's court. Palanquins, chundoles,<sup>1</sup> and ruts,<sup>2</sup> are the most numerous of this crowd of oddly-shaped vehicles : the palanquins, every one knows nowadays, are simply large boxes, with sliding doors at the sides, in which the lady reclines ; the chundole is of higher quality, loftier and more expensive ; whilst the rut is simply a small wagon, drawn by two bullocks. Soldiers, spearmen, and gold and silver sticks in waiting, accompany this crowd of conveyances in great numbers, the whole number of ladies so borne not being less than from a hundred and fifty to two hundred. You ask, what do they all do ? The answer is, they do all sorts of things. Some of them are professed storytellers, in more senses than one. They lull their mistresses to sleep with tales after the manner of the *Arabian Nights*. Others shampoo well, and

<sup>1</sup> Chandol.

<sup>2</sup> Rath.

are so employed for hours every day. Others sew; for although men generally make the women's clothes in India, yet in the harem they keep female sempstresses. Others read the Koran—the blue-stockings of the palace. Others, again, are a kind of superior slaves, doing the domestic work of the harem; but yet not to be exposed to the gaze of man, however menially employed.

So attended, with such crowds of followers and noise-makers, of both sexes and none, goes the Padshah Begum along on her way to the house of prayer; she, you may depend upon it, thinking no little of her own greatness, and of the noise her greatness makes in the world. Let her fade away from our mental vision then, if not with peace, at least with kindly wishes; for she is, after all, to be pitied, rich gilded slave. The poorest shopkeeper's wife in England, that has an honest husband and a home of her own, is more to be respected, and is a happier woman, than the Padshah Begum of Oudh, with all her glitter.



## CHAPTER X

### DUELLO—PARTRIDGES TO TIGERS

Partridges and quails trained for fighting—After-dinner sports—Antelopes—The encounter—Its usual termination—Tigers—Kagra and the *Terai-wallah*—The court in the balcony—The struggle beneath—The death-grapple—The victory.

ONE of the most common amusements of the court of Oudh was the fighting of birds and wild animals, trained for the most part for that purpose. Cock-partridges, skilfully spurred, would peck and wrestle with a pertinacity strange to see, and which much delighted his majesty. On such occasions, usually after dinner, the table was cleared, and the combatants, duly prepared by stimulating drugs, were ushered into 'the presence'. The king, seated as usual in his gilt arm-chair in the centre of one side of the table, would give the order to the attending servants, and the sport would begin. The two cocks, placed upon the table, would survey us all leisurely in succession, wondering, doubtless, what they were there for. A crow or two, shrill and yet sonorous, would be uttered and answered; but no sign of hostility. At length a hen would be placed on the table between them, exactly opposite his majesty. With leisurely step they would advance from either side to make acquaintance with the new-comer, in a solemn dignified way, just like a Turk entering a mosque or a harem.

As they each saw the other likewise advancing, evidences of hostility would appear in their gait and attitude. A feather started here, a neck protruded there, a defiant crow, answered by a more defiant chuckle—the hen remaining a patient spectator of the scene—until a final rush was made. She, flying off as quietly as possible, leaves the two lords of partridge creation to settle the dispute between them; and they, with standing feathers, and erect combs and protruded beak, are in a moment hard at work. Nothing can

be more scientific than the sparring which follows ; each watching his adversary intently, with a stretched-out neck, as the half expanded wings twitch with rage or excitement, and the spurred legs are hastily raised and depressed in succession, as if eager for the fray ; each moving cautiously round, making feigned assaults and as feigned retreats ; each red with eager desire of glory, and anxious to dip his beak in the blood of his foe. All around, human faces, gazing intently, watch the combat, and applaud now one, now the other warrior, as the battle proceeds ; the king the most excited of all.

At length, with a simultaneous bound, the two little heroes meet each other in the air a few inches above the table ; the spurs are plunged into the thighs or sides of the enemy, and the bills make savage dashes at his eyes. Blood flows, a few tiny specks here and there ; but still sufficient to show that it has been no sham assault, no harmless passage of arms without aim or purpose. The gazers salute the conqueror of the moment as he stands on the battle-field elate, and proclaims his own prowess with a triumphant chuckle. But there is no time to be lost. The foe is advancing again. He is not a whit intimidated by the drops of blood he has lost, his torn thigh, or his ripped-up side. No, he will to the work again, with right good-will and in fearless earnest.

Another jump, and again the spurs are struck, and again the beaks snap at the eyes madly. The victor of a moment before has lost his advantage, and retires a few paces, with one eye torn from its socket and dangling by a tendon on his cheek. It is cruel sport truly ; but we round the table are too much accustomed to it to think much of that, and again the room rings with shouts of laughter and uproarious encouragement to the poor little warrior that has lost his eye. He wants no encouragement, however. In a moment the fight has been renewed, if possible with more savage fierceness than ever ; and not till one of the combatants drops dead upon the table, or dying from loss of blood, is it concluded—the victor often without an eye, and left a cripple for life ; fortunate indeed if he

retain the use of one leg. So that the conquerer is often carried off by the admiring servants, to be petted for his prowess, and to die.

The wine circulates again at the table, which has been wiped clean; the king is in great vein, and insists upon every one taking snuff with him, which all pretend to do.<sup>1</sup> The female attendants blow up the fire in his hookah, which is placed on the floor behind him, and he puffs and puffs again in joyous exhilaration, laughing all the while at the clever little devil that picked out his adversary's eye so neatly, and then got ripped up in return. It was very laughable!

'But we must have some more,' exclaims hilarious majesty; and the attendants hasten to inquire whether the anointed of the Company will have quails now, or partridges again, or crows, or common cocks. He makes his choice, and the sport proceeds anew, ever becoming more noisy and uproarious as the wine circulates the more; until his majesty can give no more coherent orders, and the revel is at an end.

A beautiful description of antelope, small and delicately formed, is caught at the base of the Himalayas in great numbers, and is trained at Lucknow to fight. These fights, however, usually took place in one of the palace-gardens, or in an enclosure prepared for the purpose; the king being seated in a balcony or gallery to witness the contest, and his courtiers around and about him. Nothing could be more graceful than the half trotting gait at which the two horned heroes approached each other, their branching antlers dancing in the air as they did so; and then, to see the skilful manœuvring of the pair to gain some little advantage of position or station previous to coming to close quarters! It was beautiful to see, and pitiful that all this grace and elegance should be displayed in such a cause.

Crossing their antlers, and sparring with them vigorously,

<sup>1</sup> It is highly indecorous to sneeze in 'the presence': a native, as I have before remarked, is liable to lose his nose for so doing. [W. K.]

the two warriors now advanced, now retreated, as they gained or lost some little advantage. At length, after much twining and intertwining, after much manœuvring and cautious setting to each other, the antlers were locked finally together; and then came the eager straining of every muscle and every tendon, the anxious trial of strength, which often ended in the death of one or the other. With hind-quarters well braced up for a vigorous shove, head lowered, and feet firmly fixed against the ground, would the two combatants push and resist, and push again, pertinaciously.

One gained a little advantage at one moment, and drove his adversary a few paces back, only to lose it at another, and to be driven back in his turn. And yet, with every muscle strung to its utmost tension, with every vein swelling in the eager desire for victory, not a leg was raised that was not gracefully set down again, not a movement that did not indicate elegant proportion, harmonious adaptation of part to part, and of limb to limb.

At length the strength of one of the combatants has yielded under the long-continued exertion; the rolling eyes begin to indicate terror in their fiery distension; the legs are raised and depressed with nervous twitching, as the weaker party is gradually forced back, without a hope of regaining the advantage lost. The stronger pushes his adversary all the more fiercely at these symptoms of failing vigour. The hope that has been oozing from the breast of the weaker, inspires the stronger, and makes him all the more determined.

Great is the excitement in the gallery containing the king and his courtiers as this crisis of the struggle is attained. Great the straining of eyes and the stretching of necks to watch the *finale*—the king again the most excited and eager of all.

'He is yielding fast; he is yielding fast!' shouts his majesty; 'the dark one has the advantage.'

There could not be a doubt of the fact. Ever onwards and onwards pushes the dark antelope, the head still more depressed than before, every muscle starting, every limb

dancing with animation ; whilst, on the other side, his yielding adversary rolls his eyes about more wildly than ever. He is becoming paralysed with terror. His graceful limbs twitch with fear and uncontrollable emotion as he still yields ground. At length he has reached the limit of the enclosure ; his hind-quarters are fixed against the bamboo railing. He can go back no farther ; and still the remorseless enemy pushes on ever more fiercely.

'Now for the sport,' exclaims an eager spectator in the gallery, rubbing his hands as he sees the disheartened antelope pinned between the bamboo railing on one side, and the pushing antagonist on the other. 'Now for the sport,'—and king and courtiers chuckle over the display.

The weaker animal, as he still maintains the unequal contest, trembling as he is, hears the exclamation, and rolls his eyes as well as he can helplessly upwards : he does not know but help may come, somehow, from that quarter. The strength which has borne him up hitherto now begins to fail ; the quivering limbs totter as the antagonist, lowering his head still more, pushes with renewed vigour ; the muscles are suddenly relaxed, and he turns sideways from his opponent, as if to escape by flight. In a moment the antlers are unlocked, and the sharp points of those borne by the victor are plunged into the flanks of the vanquished. The head of the poor animal thus gored is tossed wildly up ; and he groans with pain as he sinks on one knee, big tears coursing each other down his cheeks.

But life is sweet ; and with a vigorous effort he tears himself away from his dangerous position, wrenching the head of the victor to the side as he does so. Like an arrow he is off, winging his way with the speed of the wind round the enclosure, looking for some means of escape.

The excitement in the gallery is still greater than it was ; there is to be more sport, and the king encourages the fugitive with a hearty '*shavash !*' (bravo !)

An antelope flying for life runs swiftly—the eye feels a difficulty in following him distinctly. The fugitive looks eagerly for some means of escape ; but there is none : and

as he courses round, with almost incredible speed, his flanks bearing bloody tokens of his defeat, his adversary collects himself for a new plunge. The head is again depressed almost until the mouth touches the knees; the antlers, tipped with blood, are directed in an oblique line against the side of the fleeing foe; and, watching his opportunity, he rushes forcibly against the fugitive. He has 'pinned' his antagonist again, skilful warrior that he is; the antlers are thrust far into the streaming side; the foe falls dying, or dead, perhaps; and the victor, shaking off the carcass from his horns, raises his head and triumphs.

But why talk of the struggles of insignificant antelopes, graceful though they be, when there is the contest of the more savage tiger, the unwieldy rhinoceros, or the gigantic elephant to describe? The partridges, the quails, the crows, the cocks, the trained rams and antelopes, are but the child's play of these exhibitions; two tigers tearing each other, two rhinoceroses ripping each other up with their knife-like horns, two elephants in a death-struggle, are the serious acts of these tragic comedies, or comic tragedies, or simple tragedies, if the benevolent reader will have it so—the others being merely the unimportant by-play, the lighter and the more trifling incidents.

When the two tigers, properly prepared for the contest by being kept without food and water for some days previously, were introduced into the strongly-railed and barricaded enclosure, a pin dropping in the court-yard might almost have been heard. Expectation stood on tiptoe to know what would be the result.

There was a famous tiger—a monster of a tiger—named *Kagra*, who had triumphed at Lucknow on several occasions. He was certainly one of the largest I have ever seen; and beautifully streaked was his glossy coat, as it moved freely over his muscular limbs and long back. The connoisseurs in sport had despaired of finding a fitting adversary for *Kagra*, when news arrived that a tiger of enormous size and strength had been taken uninjured in the Terai—the long strip of jungle-land between Oudh and Nepaul, just

at the foot of the Himalayas. It was anticipated that there would be glorious sport when this new monster was brought face to face with the redoubted Kagra.

The stranger—the *Teraï-rallah* as he was called—was taken especial care of; and it was on the occasion of the visit of the commander-in-chief<sup>1</sup> of the Anglo-Indian army to the King of Oudh that the contest was to take place. More than ordinary pains were taken to render the spectacle imposing. The court-yard in which the battle was to be fought was richly decorated with leaves and flowers, with all that brilliancy of colouring and taste in its distribution for which the natives of India are so deservedly famous. The gallery to receive the king and his court, the commander-in-chief and his staff, was elaborately ornamented with gilding and flags. The royal canopy—umbrella-shaped—of crimson and gold tissue, was raised above the state-chair; whilst similar seats of honour were prepared on either hand for the commander-in-chief and the resident. The king wore his crown on the occasion; it was a new one, only lately made, with an elaborate display of jewellery, and a beautiful heron's plume of snowy whiteness bending gracefully over it. He could act with dignity when he liked; and the contrast between the rich, though softened, amber colour of his countenance, and the glittering jewels, and the delicate plume, was very imposing and pleasing to look upon. He wore on this occasion his Oriental dress, formed of the glittering kincobs<sup>2</sup> of China—silk of gold-like and silver-like appearance, glancing with every movement like burnished jewellery. The commander-in-chief wore his general's uniform; the resident was dressed in plain clothes. It was a spectacle not easily forgotten. Such a scene will live robustly in

<sup>1</sup> Captain Mundy describes the wild-beast fights held before Lord Combermere, Commander-in-Chief, at Lucknow in December 1827, *Tour in India*, i, Ch. 1. See also Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings in Search of the Picturesque*, i. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Kinkhoob, 'silk brocade worked in gold and silver flowers.' Benares is famous for its manufacture.

the memory when a thousand more important events have faded into forgetfulness.

The cages of Kagra and Terai-wallah were brought to opposite sides of the court-yard, both commanded by our position in the gallery. We could see the long shining backs of the tigers as they roamed round their cages in great excitement; occasionally there was a snarl and a display of teeth alarming to witness, as some attendant approached the cages.

It was intended that the animals should become aware of the presence of each other, and hence the previous delay; for, ferocious as the tiger is, he is naturally a cowardly animal, and, if brought unexpectedly into the presence of danger, may cower and retreat from the contest.

I have seen two of them, properly prepared, that is, both hungry and thirsty, when bounding into the enclosure, and ignorant that another tiger was in the vicinity, do their utmost to get back into their cages; and, failing that, slink away to a corner, crouch down there upon their bellies, and watch each other intently, indisposed to hostility.

It was evident that Kagra and the Terai-wallah were soon aware of each other's vicinity; for as they prowled round, they would stand and growl and show their teeth at the opposite cage in an eminently tiger-like manner. The commander-in-chief and the resident had inspected both of them previously.

'On which of them will your excellency bet?' asked the king, as he saw the commander-in-chief watching them intently.

'Your majesty will perhaps pardon me,' said the general. The Company were wroth with the king, because his territory was in so much confusion and disorder, so the commander-in-chief would not bet with him.

'A hundred gold mohurs on Kagra,' said the king, turning to the resident.

'Done, your majesty; I think the Terai-wallah is the more likely to succeed,' was the resident's answer.



The king rubbed his hands with glee. He was beginning to enjoy the situation.

'Will you bet on the Terai-wallah?' he asked his prime minister eagerly in Hindustani.

'My lord the resident is always right; I will, sire,' was the prime minister's reply—prime minister in name only, it must be remembered, but a man of great wealth; the European barber then standing among the king's suite was the real prime minister.

'A hundred gold mohurs, then, on Kagra,' said his majesty.

The prime minister accepted the bet, and took out a very elegant little tablet from his belted Cashmere shawl to make a note of the transaction. Not that he intended to remind his majesty of it, had his majesty chosen to forget; but in case majesty should say he had bet on Kagra, he would be able to show the entry made at the time, and express timidly a doubt whether 'the refuge of the world' might not have been correct and he wrong. Aye, and he would pay his hundred gold mohurs, too, if 'the refuge of the world' insisted that he *had* bet on the Terai-wallah; pay it smilingly, and then repay himself by squeezing a little harder than usual—only a *little*—the next rich delinquent that passed through his hands.

The signal was given—the bamboo railing in front of the cages rose simultaneously on either side—the doors of the cages opened. Terai-wallah sprang with a single bound out of his cage, opening his huge jaws widely, and shaking from side to side his long tail in an excited way. Kagra advanced more leisurely into the arena, but with similar demonstrations. They might have been fifty feet apart, as they stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, the tails playing all the time.

At length Kagra advanced a few paces; his adversary laid himself down forthwith upon the court-yard, just where he stood, facing him, but with his feet well under him not extended, evidently quite prepared for a spring. Kagra watched his foe intently, and still advanced slowly and

cautiously, but not in a straight line, rather towards the side, describing an arc of a circle as he drew near.

The Terai-wallah soon rose to his feet and likewise advanced, describing a similar arc on the opposite side, both gradually approaching each other, however. It was a moment of breathless suspense in the gallery. Every eye was fixed on the two combatants as they thus tried to circumvent each other; it was enough to arrest the attention, for the tigers were unusually large; both were in beautiful condition, plump and muscular; the colour of the Terai-wallah was somewhat lighter than that of Kagra, a more yellowish hue shone between the black stripes. Both were very beautiful, and very courageous, and very formidable.

At length, as they thus advanced, step by step, very slowly, Kagra made a spring. His former victories had probably made him a little self-confident. He sprang, not as if it were a voluntary effort of his own, but as if he were suddenly impelled aloft by some uncontrollable galvanic force which he could not resist. The spring was so sudden, so rapid, so impetuous, that it had quite the appearance of being involuntary. The Terai-wallah was not unprepared. As rapidly as Kagra had hurled himself up into the air, so rapidly did his adversary jump aside; both movements seemed to be simultaneous, so admirably were they executed. Kagra alighted, foiled; but before he could recover himself, before he could have well assured himself that he was foiled, the Terai-wallah was upon him. The claws of his adversary were fixed firmly in his neck, and the horrid jaws were already grating near his throat. It was the work of a moment. We could scarcely see that the Terai-wallah had gained the advantage—we could scarcely distinguish his huge fore-paws grasping the neck, and his open mouth plunged at the throat—when Kagra made another spring, a bound in which he evidently concentrated all his energy. The Terai-wallah was dragged with him for a little; the claws that had been dug into his neck were torn gratingly through it; the open mouth snapped fiercely but harmlessly at the advancing shoulder, and Kagra was free. His neck

and shoulder, however, bore bloody traces of the injury he had received ; and no sooner did he feel that he had got rid of his assailant than he turned with greater fierceness than ever to assail his foe.

'Shavash ! Kagra—bravo ! I'll make it two hundred gold mohurs,' said the king, turning to his prime minister.

'The asylum of the world commands it—two hundred let it be,' replied Rooshun, as he took out his tablets anew.

But the interest of the contest in the arena was too intense to admit of our attention being withdrawn from it. It was but for an instant that the two tigers stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, after Kagra had shaken off the grip of his antagonist. With distended jaws, the ample mouths opened to their utmost limit, their beautifully-streaked skins starting from their forms in excitement, their eyes distended as they watched each other, the ends of the tails moving once or twice, as if with convulsive twitches, they stood. Kagra was the first to attack again. This time his opponent was too near to try his former stratagem of slipping to one side : he met him boldly. They stood at that moment near the centre of the arena ; and, as the sharp claws moved incessantly, and the huge mouths tried to grasp the neck on either side, it was impossible to distinguish the attack from the defence ; all was so rapid.

Drawing gradually nearer as they thus fought with claws and mouths ferociously, uttering fierce snarls as they did so, each seemed to have succeeded in gripping his antagonist. With their mouths buried in each other's throats, and their claws dug deeply into the neck, they rose at length to the contest on their hind legs—straining and tugging, and wrestling, as it were, with each other both with their utmost force and skill. It was a spectacle of startling interest, that ; and however you may turn away, good madam, and exclaim horrible ! or savage ! believe me there were many elements of the sublime in that contest ; and doubtless such contests often take place in the jungle.

They stood more than six feet high as they thus grappled with each other, elevated on their hind legs, in a sort of death-

struggle ; their round heads and glaring eyes surmounting the muscular pillars of their long bodies beautifully. It was wonderful to see how firmly the claws were fixed into the neck on both sides. There was no shifting of position, no further grasping either with claw or mouth. It was now a contest of life or death. Both were bleeding freely, and it would chiefly depend upon strength as to which should be thrown under the other, and thereby probably lose his hold.

These things take long to describe, but they occurred very rapidly. There was deep silence in the arena and in the gallery, as the two wild beasts thus stood confronting each other on their hind legs—deep silence and earnest gazing on all sides and from all quarters ; even the very breathing was suspended in many as they watched the contest. Not for long, however, as I have said. Kagra, more skilful or more impetuous than his antagonist, overthrew him at length, and the two rolled over on the arena ; the Terai-wallah on his back beneath, Kagra above.

‘ Shavash, Kagra ! ’ uttered the king again, well pleased. ‘ Kagra has the advantage,’ muttered more than one voice in English.

But the advantage was only momentary. The hind claws of Kagra were being plunged into the belly of his foe, when the Terai-wallah, who never let go his hold for a moment with his mouth, struck one of his fore-paws over the face of his antagonist. His claws evidently pierced Kagra’s eyes ; one of them was torn from its socket ; and uttering a howl of pain or despair, the mutilated beast relinquished his grip, and would have torn himself from his antagonist.

This, however, he was not permitted to do. The Terai-wallah clung pertinaciously to his adversary’s throat : his teeth were deeply infixed. He was dragged for a few paces over the arena by Kagra, who tried to release himself in vain ; and then, all at once leaping from his prostrate position, the Terai-wallah hurled himself on the top of his assailant.

The contest was virtually at an end. Kagra, now fallen beneath his foe, and fast losing blood, was incapable of

regaining the advantage he had lost. The Terai-wallah, thrusting one paw under his lower jaw, forced back the head farther until he infixed his teeth still more deeply into the throat. Kagra did battle ineffectually with his claws, tearing the skin of his antagonist here and there ; but he had lost the hold he had obtained with his mouth, and was evidently fast sinking under the victor's grasp and bite.

'Kagra is beaten !' was uttered in Hindustani and English in the gallery above.

'He is,' said the king, as he gave orders to the servants below to open Kagra's cage, and drive off the Terai-wallah.

Red-hot rods were thrust through the bars of the enclosure, and the successful tiger was cruelly burnt before he would relinquish his hold. It was the most barbarous part of the exhibition ; and yet it was the only way to save the life of Kagra. At length the Terai-wallah was driven off, his jaws dropping blood as he went. Kagra's cage was opened, and he made for it immediately, with all the marks of the conquered about him ; he left his track on the arena in blood-stains, whilst his tail hung flaccidly between his legs ; yet, though he was flying, he fled stealthily, as it were, not vigorously and upright as a horse would have fled, but with stealthy, creeping, cat-like agility. The red-hot rods were held before the Terai-wallah to prevent him from pursuing. He still faced towards, and glared after, his beaten foe ; and ere Kagra had reached his cage, he sprang high above the rods to attack the flying tiger once more. He fell short of his victim, however. Kagra quickened his steps, reached the cage, and buried himself in its farther corner, cowering like a whipped cur.

As for the Terai-wallah, he watched his defeated antagonist steadily to the last, never once taking his eyes off him ; and then, shaking himself two or three times, he licked his paws, rose majestically from his crouching posture, and walked deliberately towards his own cage, which was open to receive him ; his torn shoulders, and the large drops of blood which fell from him as he walked, proclaiming how dearly he had won his victory.

## CHAPTER XI

### DUELLO—THE RHINOCEROS AND ELEPHANT

Fighting camels—The rhinoceros—His peaceful nature—His manner of fighting—The rhinoceros and the elephant—The rhinoceros and the tiger—The fighting elephants—*Malkeer*—The struggle—Fall of the mahout—His death—The elephant's remorse—Another fight—Danger and escape.

I HAVE already described the ordinary fights of birds, antelopes, and tigers : I now turn to the larger and more unwieldy animals. Nothing more brutal than the contests of camels can well be conceived. They are trained to fighting with each other in Lucknow ; but nature intended them to be useful, peaceful animals, not warlike ; and when man, endeavouring to change their nature, insists upon their being warlike for his gratification, the sight is odious. It is well known that, like the lama of Peru, the camel discharges a fluid from its throat at its adversary. I have seen those trained to fight bring up one of their stomachs in the energy of their spitting ! A horrible sight ! Nor was it more pleasant to see one grasp the long lip of the other between his teeth, and drag it off in a brutal way. Such fights end only in lacerating the head and injuring the eyes, the huge bodies remaining untouched.

Naturally, the rhinoceros is also a peaceful animal. Bishop Heber says, that in Ghazi-u-deen's reign the rhinoceros was used in a carriage, and to carry a howdah. I have never seen him so employed. Although peaceful, however, he is better fitted by nature for warfare than the poor camel. His knife-like horn, his skin more impenetrable than a coat of mail, his compact body, and huge muscular limbs, all render him a fearful antagonist to the largest animals. When roused, he will soon make away, I doubt not, with a hippopotamus, and is a match for an elephant.

The extent to which these various animals were kept at Lucknow for purposes of ' sport ' may be conceived, from

the fact of the royal menagerie having contained, when I served the king of Oudh, from fifteen to twenty rhinoceroses. They were kept in the open park around Chaungunge, and were allowed to roam about, at large, within certain limits.

It was usually at this palace, Chaungunge, and sometimes at another on the banks of the river called Mobarrack Munzul,<sup>1</sup> that the fights of the larger animals took place, generally in an enclosure made for the purpose, over one side of which a balcony had been built for the king and his attendants, not unlike a portico in front of a house to receive carriages—structures far more common in Calcutta than in London. Sometimes, however, the fights took place in the open park, where galleries had been erected on substantial pillars. The two rhinoceroses, males—always more ready to engage in combat at particular seasons than at other times, just as the elephants are—were duly prepared by stimulating drugs, and let into the enclosure from opposite sides, or were driven in the park towards each other by active fellows on horseback with long spears. The first sight of the antagonist was generally enough to cause each to be ready to attack; for they know at once, by their keen sense of smell, whether a male or female is in their vicinity. Rushing against each other, with heads somewhat lowered, they met angrily in the midst, thrusting forward their armed snouts in a hog-like way.

So thick are their hides on the back and legs, that even the short knife-like horn of the snout can make no impression upon it. In the more tender skin of the belly alone, or between the legs, can injury be done. The object of each, then, in closing, is to introduce his snout between the fore-legs of his antagonist, and so rip him up; a process which the slight curve of the horn backwards renders comparatively an easy one, if the required position be attained.

But as both equally seek the same advantage, their heads and snouts in the first instance meet in the midst. They strike each other, they push, they lower their heads, they grunt valorously, displaying an amount of activity and

<sup>1</sup> *Mubdrak Manzil*. See note, p. 222.

energy that one would conceive it almost impossible for them to exercise with their unwieldy forms. The snouts rattle against each other as they mutually strike; the horns may come into contact too, and the sound which is produced plainly tells that it is with no child's play that they are thus crossed. At length, in some way or other, they appear to be locked together, horn to horn, snout to snout, head to head—the heads always down defending the chest and the entrance between the fore-legs. Then commences a hard struggle—a firm continuous pushing with all their might. Each throws the whole weight of his huge form into the scale, and with that the enormous strength with which nature has endowed him. They push, and push, and push again with obstinate perseverance. The weaker must ultimately lose ground. He is driven back, at first slowly, step by step, then more rapidly, in a sort of backward trot; the stronger and sturdier pursuing his advantage with implacable ferocity. At length the weaker, finding that he can no longer make head, makes a desperate plunge backwards to release his snout and horns. It is the decisive moment of the combat. I have seen it end very variously. If in an enclosure, and the weaker has no room to withdraw himself, he is almost sure to be ripped up by the impetuous assailant, and to fall very severely wounded or dead; his adversary being driven off by hot irons thrust under him, and spears. In the open park, however, the weaker, if active, sometimes succeeded in detaching himself, and scampering off as fast as possible without receiving any severe hurt. The stronger pursued with hearty good will, and they were soon out of sight. In such cases, all would depend upon the nature of the ground, and the relative activity of the two. If the flying combatant were overtaken by his pursuer, nothing could save his life, for a gaping wound, a foot deep, would soon be made in his chest. On one occasion, however, and on only one, I saw a very different termination of the contest to that which was expected.

The weaker had been gradually retreating, at first slowly,



afterwards more rapidly. It was in the open park. At length he made a plunge backwards to release himself, and succeeded. The stronger brute, evidently somewhat pig-headed, surprised at the action, thrust his snout upwards in an astonished way; his more active enemy saw the movement at once, and, though evidently preparing to fly, checked himself, lowered his head, and had his snout introduced between his enemy's fore-legs in an instant. The stream of blood which flowed from the wounded combatant, and his quick snort of pain, proclaimed the victory of him who, up to this moment, had been losing ground, and hope perhaps. The wounded rhinoceros now turned to fly, losing blood rapidly, and his intestines partially protruding from the wound. His adversary allowed him to turn and run a few paces; and then burying his snout again between his hind legs, gored him severely. He fell in a frightfully mangled way, and the active horsemen with their long spears drove off the assailant—no easy matter. Whether the wounded rhinoceros died or not, I do not know. I probably heard at the time and have forgotten. So skilful are the native leeches, however, in attending these monsters, that I should not at all wonder if he recovered.

The contest between a rhinoceros and an elephant is not nearly so interesting as that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. In the former case it is not easy, in the first place, to make the two animals attack each other, even though the elephant be must,<sup>1</sup> and the rhinoceros in a similar condition. Should they take a fancy, however, to try each other's mettle, the elephant approaches as usual, with his trunk thrown up into the air and head protruded; the rhinoceros either standing upon his guard, or also advancing with lowered snout. The tusks of the elephant sometimes pass on each side of the rhinoceros harmlessly, whilst the huge head shoves the lighter animal backwards. If the elephant's tusks trip up the rhinoceros, as is sometimes the case, they are then plunged into him without mercy; but more frequently the contest ends to the disadvantage of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 79, foot-note. [W. K.]

the elephant, by the rhinoceros inserting his snout between his antagonist's fore-legs and partially ripping him up ; the elephant belabouring all the time with his trunk, to a certain extent uselessly, however. Prevented by his tusks, the rhinoceros cannot get his snout far under the elephant's body, so that the wound he inflicts is not generally a very severe one.

Between the rhinoceros and the tiger, however, the contest is one of infinitely more animation and excitement. The steady impassive guard of the larger animal ; the stealthy, cat-like attack of the smaller—the lowered snout of the one ; the gleaming teeth of the other—the cocked horn, kept valorously in an attitude of defiant guard ; the bullet head, with its gleaming eyes, together with the brawny claws—were all things to be watched and to interest. The rhinoceros, however, is secure from attack on his back, and when the tiger springs, his claws get no hold in the plate-like covering of his antagonist. Should the rhinoceros be overthrown by the tiger's weight, then the fate of the former is sealed ; he is ripped and torn up and gnawed from beneath, as a tiger only can rip, and tear up, and gnaw ; I have heard of such results following the tiger's assault, but have never witnessed such.

In nine cases out of ten, the rhinoceros gains the advantage ; the tiger springs, and springs, and springs again, still baffled by the voluminous armour-like skin of his antagonist, until, at some moment or other, the rhinoceros seizes his opportunity, and succeeds in inflicting a severe wound with his formidable horn. The tiger then declines the combat, and easily escapes its unwieldy enemy, should the rhinoceros take it into his head to attack.

There is no other animal, perhaps, so utterly impervious to attack as the rhinoceros ; there is certainly none other that takes all attacks with such perfect coolness and self-possession. Shut up in a comparatively small enclosure with a ferocious tiger, he seems to be not in the least disconcerted—not even to find his situation uncomfortable—but, with wonderful phlegmatic ease, stands prepared for all

contingencies. His coat of armour is, of course, his chief defence; but the shape of his head contributes much to his safety. It curves inwards from the snout to the forehead; so that the eyes are deeply sunk and securely wedged into a concave bone where they cannot be easily assailed—the short pointed horn forming an additional defence to them, and one of the most formidable weapons of offence too, possessed by any animal, when the strength of the rhinoceros is considered. There is something surprising, notwithstanding all this, in seeing this pig-like animal withstanding or conquering the largest tigers and elephants. I have never seen the rhinoceros pitted against the lion. The king of Oudh had but three or four lions, and he reserved them for very special occasions; but a contest between the two would but be similar, I doubt not, to that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. Indeed the lion fights so exactly like the tiger, that a contest between two lions is precisely similar to that between two tigers. There was no lion in Lucknow a match for the largest tigers there; doubtless the few found in the north-western Himalayas, and in Asia generally, are not equal to those of Africa; but I very much doubt whether the Bengal tiger is not the more formidable animal of the two. I have never seen any lions in London or Paris equal in size to the largest tigers at Lucknow.

Of the hundred and fifty elephants possessed by the king of Oudh, there was one with one broken tusk, that had been victor in a hundred fights. His name was *Malleer*; and he was a great favourite with the king. His tusk had been broken off bit by bit in several encounters; the elephants rushing against each other with such force, as sometimes to snap off a portion, or the whole of a tusk. *Malleer* had lost his, as I have said, gradually. He was a formidable black fellow, very terrible when in that excited state called *must*. During the visit of the commander-in-chief it was determined that a fitting antagonist should be found for *Malleer*, and that he should once more make his appearance on the stage as a gladiator. It was fortunately the proper season. *Malleer* was *must*; and another gigantic

elephant, also black, and of course in a similar state, was selected to be his antagonist.

When in this excited state, two male elephants have but to see each other to commence the combat forthwith ; there is no incitement required. Each has its own keeper, or *mahout*<sup>1</sup> as he is called, seated on his neck—the only person who can safely approach the animal at such a season. In the mahout's hands, however, even then, the monster is generally docile as a child.

There is no preparation required for the combat but the passing of a secure string from the neck of the elephant to his tail—a string by which the mahout holds on and retains his position during the combat. It may be easily supposed that the poor man's situation is by no means a comfortable one during such a contest ; but so jealous is each of the good fame of his beast, that he would rather have his own selected for such sport than be excused. It is an honour paid to him as well as to the gigantic combatant whom he guides. Should he be thrown, the elephant opposed to him would certainly destroy him if he got an opportunity. He therefore clings to the string with all the tenacity of a man grasping a plank after a shipwreck.

On the occasion on which Malleer's services were required for the amusement of the British commander-in-chief, and the king and court of Oudh, we were in one of the king's palaces, situated on the banks of the Goomty. A terrace built on the water side overlooked the river. An open park was on the opposite side of the stream ; and on that bank it was resolved the contest should take place, we inspecting it from the balcony. The Goomty at this place was not wider than Fleet Street in London, and the terrace projected over the water, so that we were quite near enough to see the encounter well. The opposite bank was covered with grass ; there was nothing to impede the vision for a considerable distance.

At a signal given by the king, the two elephants advanced from opposite sides, each with his mahout on his neck ;

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced *ma-houth*. [W. K.]

Malleer with his one tusk looking by no means so formidable as the huge black antagonist whom he was to fight, and who was well furnished with ivory. The moment they caught sight of each other, the two elephants, as if with an instinctive perception of what was expected of them, put their trunks and tails aloft, and shuffled up to each other with considerable speed, after their unwieldy fashion, trumpeting out loudly mutual defiance. This is the ordinary attitude of attack of the elephant. He puts his trunk up perpendicularly, in order that it may be out of harm's way. His tail is similarly raised from excitement. His trumpeting consists of a series of quick blasts, between roars and grunting.

Malleer and his foe rushed at each other impetuously. The sound of their huge heads coming into violent collision might have been heard at the distance of half a mile. This may sound like an exaggeration: it is not so. When the reader only thinks of the bulk of the elephant, the great weight, the momentum acquired by the rapid motion, and then the concussion of two such bodies coming full tilt against each other, he will not be surprised at it. More than once, on such occasions, have I seen one or more tusks snapping short off, and thrown up into the air with the terrible force of the collision.

The first blow struck, both elephants now set themselves vigorously to push against each other with all their might. Mouth to mouth, tusk to tusk, both trunks still elevated in the air perpendicularly, their feet set firmly in massive solidity upon the ground, did they push and push, and shove and shove, not with one resolute, long-continued effort, but with repeated short strokes of their unwieldy forms. The heads were not separated for a moment; but the backs were curving slightly and then becoming straight again in regular succession, as each shove and push was administered. The mahouts, seated on the neck, were not idle the while. They shouted, encouraging each his own warrior, with hearty good-will, almost with frantic energy, using the iron prod, employed in driving them, freely upon

the skull. It was a spectacle to make one hold in the breath with earnest gazing—a spectacle to make the blood come fast and thumping through the veins—as the two huge combatants pushed and shoved with all their might vehemently, and as the two mahouts exerted all their powers to encourage them.

It is evident in such a contest, as generally happens with these wild animals, that the stronger combatant gains the victory. Instances do occur in which superior agility causes the weaker to bear off the honours of success; but such instances are rare—in the case of two opposing elephants rarer, perhaps, than with other animals. But what is the end of this pushing? you ask. If the stronger succeed in overthrowing his adversary, the death of the vanquished is the probable result. This sometimes occurs when great violence is used, and the weaker can hardly retreat quick enough. He loses hope and strength together, turns awkwardly to fly, is pushed as he turns, and falls. The end is then soon seen. The victor plunges his tusks without mercy into the side of his foe, as he lies helplessly on the ground, and death follows. If the weaker, by great agility, succeed in turning and running away, a chase is the result, which ends either in the escape of the fugitive, or in his being sorely belaboured by the trunk and galled by the tusks of his antagonist.

But Malleer and his foe are shoving heartily all this time, whilst I am discoursing of other things—ay, and the king of Oudh, the British commander-in-chief, and the resident, are gazing intently on them from the balcony as they so shove; gazing intently, so that the balcony is absolutely without noise or sound.

At length the redoubted Malleer, one-tusked though he was, began to gain the advantage. The fore-leg of his antagonist was raised as if uncertainly, one could not tell whether to advance or retreat, as he still stoutly shoved with all his might. But it was evident very soon that it was not to advance, but to retreat, that the leg was so raised. It had hardly been set down again, when the other was

similarly raised and lowered. The mahout of Malleer saw the movement, and knew well what it indicated. He shouted more frantically than ever—almost demoniacally in fact—striking the skull with his iron prong in a wild excited way. But Malleer needed no encouragement. He was too old a warrior not to feel that another victory was about being added to his laurels, and his strength seemed increased by the conviction. He and his mahout together became more and more excited every instant.

At this time they were only a few yards from the bank of the Goomty, a little to the left of our balcony. The retreating elephant gave way step by step, slowly, drawing nearer to the river as he did so. At length, with a sudden leap backwards, he tore himself from his antagonist, and threw his unwieldy form down the bank into the river. His mahout clung to the rope over his back, and was soon seen safe and sound on his neck, whilst the elephant swam off to gain the opposite bank. Malleer was furious at this escape of his antagonist. His mahout wanted him to follow ; but he would not take to the water. He glared round, wild with fury, to see what he could attack. His mahout, still urging him, with no gentle strokes and with wild shouts, to pursue, at length lost his balance in his excitement, as Malleer turned savagely about, and fell to the earth ! He fell right before the infuriated beast whom he had been rendering more and more wild and ungovernable. We were not left in doubt as to his fate for a moment. We had just time to see that the man had fallen, and was lying on his back, with his limbs disordered, one leg under him and the other stretched helplessly out, whilst both arms were raised aloft, when we saw the huge foot of the elephant placed upon his chest, and heard the bones crackling, as the whole body of the man was crushed into a shapeless mass !

There was hardly time for a cry ; the swaying of his form on the elephant's neck—his fall—the sound caused by his striking the elastic turf—the foot placed upon him, and the horrid crushing which followed—all was the work of an instant or two. But this did not sate the enraged

animal. Still keeping his foot on the man's chest, he seized one arm with his trunk and tore it from the body. In another moment it was hurling high up in the air, the blood spiriting from it as it whirled. It was a horrible sight. The other arm was then seized, and was similarly dealt with.

We were all horrified, of course, at the untoward result of our sport, for which nobody was to blame but the huge beast; when our alarm and horror were increased at seeing a woman rushing from the side whence Malleer had made his appearance, rushing directly towards the elephant. She had an infant in her arms, and she ran as fast as her burden would permit. The commander-in-chief stood up in the balcony, exclaiming :

'Here will be more butchery, your majesty. Can nothing be done to prevent it?'

'It is the mahout's wife, I have no doubt,' replied the king; 'what can be done?'

But the resident had already given the order for the horsemen with their long spears to advance and lead off the elephant; given the order, it is true, but the execution of those orders was not an affair of a moment. Time was lost in communicating them—the men had to mount—they must advance cautiously, five on each side. By means of their long spears, they conduct the *must* elephants about, directing the spears against the trunk, which is tender, if the animal be wayward. They are, of course, expert horsemen; and must be prepared to gallop off at a moment's notice, should the animal slip past the spear and advance to attack.

Whilst the spearmen were thus preparing to lead off the elephant, that is, mounting, and then advancing cautiously from either side, the poor woman, reckless of consequences, was running towards the elephant.

'O Malleer, Malleer! cruel, savage beast! see what you have done,' she cried; 'here finish our house at once. You have taken off the roof, now break down the walls; you have killed my husband, whom you loved so well, now kill me and his son.'



To those unaccustomed to India, this language may appear unnatural or ridiculous. It is precisely the sense of what she said ; every word of it almost was long impressed upon my mind. The mahouts and their families live with the elephants they attend, and talk to them as to reasonable beings, in reproof, in praise, in entreaty, in anger.

We expected to see the wild animal turn from the mangled remains of the husband to tear the wife and child asunder. We were agreeably disappointed. Malleer's rage was satiated, and he now felt remorse for what he had done. You could see it in his drooping ears and downcast head. He took his foot off the shapeless carcass. The wife threw herself upon it, and the elephant stood by respecting her grief. It was a touching spectacle. The woman lamented loudly, turning now and then to the elephant to reproach him ; whilst he stood as if conscious of his fault, looking sadly at her. Once or twice the unconscious infant caught at his trunk and played with it. He had doubtless played with it often before ; for it is no uncommon thing to see the mahout's child playing between the fore-legs of the elephant—it is no uncommon thing to see the elephant waving his trunk over it, allowing it to go a little distance, and then tenderly bringing it back again, as tenderly as a mother would.

In the meantime the spearmen were now advancing. They were mounted on active horses accustomed to the work. They came up on either side ; and gently touching the proboscis of the elephant with the ends of their spears, indicated thus what they wanted. Malleer flapped back his long ears, and looked threateningly at them. He might let his mahout's wife pacify him ; he was not to be led by them ; you could see the determination in his eye. They touched him again, this time a little more sharply. He threw up his trunk, sounded out a defiant threat, and charged full upon those on his left. They were off in an instant—their horses scampering away with all speed, whilst Malleer pursued. The savage fury of the elephant was gradually returning ; and when the band which he had attacked

had leaped a wall and were off out of sight, he turned upon the other. It was now their turn to fly, which they did as nimbly as their companions, Malleer pursuing as fast as he could.

'Let the woman call him off,' shouted the king; 'he will attend to her.'

She did so; and Malleer came back, just as a spaniel would do at the call of his master.

'Let the woman mount with her child and take him away,' was the king's order. It was communicated to her. The elephant knelt at her command. She mounted. Malleer gave her, first the mutilated carcass of her husband, and then her infant son. She sat upon his neck, in her husband's place, and led him quietly away. From that day she was his keeper, his mahout. He would have no other. When most excited, when most wild, *must* or not *must*, she had but to command, and he obeyed. The touch of her hand on his trunk was enough to calm his most violent outbursts of temper. She could lead him without fear or danger to herself; and the authority which she had thus obtained, doubtless her son would possess after her.

And now that I have given so full an account of the destruction of one mahout, I will describe also the escape of another, whom we all regarded as doomed.

It was in the course of one of these fights, in a garden surrounded by a substantial iron fence, that the incident occurred. As usual, there had been prolonged pushing—a series of incessant pushes—between the two antagonists. When the weaker had given way, he turned abruptly from his foe, and ran round the enclosure, pursued by the victor. The order was given to allow the fugitive to escape. As he left the enclosure, by some accident or other, his mahout fell on the inside. The pursuing elephant did not see him for a little; but, as the monster stood near the only opening, it was impossible for the poor man to escape thereby. It was not long, however—only for a moment or two—that the man remained unobserved by the infuriated animal; and the moment he was seen a chase began. It was

impossible to succour him, for the whole affair was the work of a few seconds. At length the elephant came up with the unfortunate man. For their own mahouts the elephants may have some respect, but towards the mahouts of their antagonists they feel nothing but animosity.

The driver of the charging elephant did what he could to turn him from the pursuit of the man; but his efforts were absolutely without avail.

The elephant had his trunk raised ready to attack or strike, when the poor fugitive stood cowering before him in a corner of the iron railing. The elephant thrust forward his head, and pushed with all his might. His tusks projected at each side of the corner in which the man stood, and with his huge head he stood pushing and shoving, with the same short forcible strokes he would have used had he stood opposite to an opposing elephant. The man stood, however—protected by the iron railing against which the massive head of the monster shoved—stood untouched, pressing into the corner, making himself as thin as possible, with his arms stretched by his side.

To us, from a gallery above, it appeared that the poor mahout must have been crushed to death; we could see only the massive back and voluminous haunches of the brawny monster, as he still shoved with trunk erect; but we were mistaken. The man, finding himself unhurt in the corner, gradually slipped down into a sitting posture; the elephant doubtless thinking (for he could not see him) that he was gradually annihilating the mahout as he felt him sink. Once seated the man made his way adroitly between the fore-legs of the huge beast, and thus escaped into the arena. To our surprise we saw him issuing from the feet of the monster, in a stealthy sort of way, not a bone injured, not even a scratch upon his skin. In another moment the man was off, having escaped through the opening of the enclosure; and before the attendants had brought fireworks and a match to drive off the elephant, the man, whom they must have expected to find a shapeless corpse, was safe and sound in their midst.

Strange to say, the most terrible *must* elephant, even when roused to fury by rage, may be thoroughly cowed and frightened by letting off fireworks in front of him. A discharged rocket will arrest him in the midst of the most impetuous attack ; and he flies terrified from a fizzing Catherine-wheel or harmless collection of crackers. It may, therefore, be supposed that fireworks are always kept ready for explosion when danger is anticipated from the elephants, particularly in the season when they are most unmanageable, and most likely to do harm.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MOHURRIM

The Sheahs and the Soonnies—Origin of the Mohurrim—The Emanberra—The lament for Hassan and Hosein—The Durgah—Dhull-dhull—The wedding procession—The tomb—The burial-ground—The funeral rites—Contests at the grave.

It is a strange thing to witness the contrasts presented in the life of the Mussulman population of India at the different periods of the year. The month of Mohurrim<sup>1</sup>—one of the Arabic months—is the anniversary of the death of two early leaders of 'the faithful,' near relatives of Mohammed himself, Hassan and Hosein,<sup>2</sup> and is observed by more than one-half of the Mohammedan population of India, including

<sup>1</sup> Muharram.

<sup>2</sup> Hasan and Husain were grandsons of the Prophet, whose daughter Fatima, their mother, was wife to Ali, son of Abu Talib, an uncle of Muhammad. The difference between Shiah and Sunni was at first political, and it arose as a result of the feuds which broke out after Muhammad's death. The first three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Usman, are not recognized by the Shiahs, who hold that the Prophet's authority passed directly to his son-in-law Ali, the fourth Caliph; whilst the Sunnis recognize the four as Caliphs, whence they are also known as Chahar yari.

Knighton is incorrect in stating as he does (p. 177) that the Sunnis regard Hasan and Husain as lawfully put to death. All Muhammadans venerate Husain as a holy martyr and 'hold in the deepest abhorrence Yazid' the Ummayyad Caliph responsible for his death. Hasan was not slain at Karbalâ, but had been poisoned by one of his wives ten years previously (A.D. 670): his death is commemorated with that of his younger brother by the Shiahs, who hold the unfounded opinion that the woman was instigated by the Caliph to assassinate him.

The manner of celebrating the Muharram as described by Knighton (v. also *Eliahu Jan's Story*, Ch. VIII) is peculiar to India, and in India is a practice of comparatively late growth. It affords an interesting example of the influence of Hinduism upon creeds with which it comes into close contact. The Sunni objection to the Muharram celebration is due to the idolatrous character of the ceremonies, and

the court of Lucknow, as a period of deep humiliation and sorrowful remembrance. By more than one-half of the Mohammedan population, because, as every one knows nowadays, 'the faithful' are divided into two great sects, the Sheahs and the Soonnies, who feel towards each other in a religious point of view, much as fanatical Protestants and Roman Catholics mutually do. The Turks are Soonnies, the Persians Sheahs—generally speaking, indeed, the western Mussulmans, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, are Soonnies; the eastern, from the Euphrates to Java, are Sheahs.<sup>1</sup>

The Mohurrim, as the festival is called, scarcely ever passes over in India without contests between the two great parties—between those who regard the deaths of Hassan and Hosein as barbarous murders on the one side, that is the Sheahs, and those who, on the other, look upon them as having been usurpers, and lawfully put to death by the true head of 'the faithful'—the reigning caliph. These latter are the Soonnies.

On the first day of the Mohurrim, the vast Mohammedan population of Lucknow appears to be suddenly snatched away from all interests and employment in the affairs of earth. The streets are deserted, every one is shut up in his house, mourning with his family. On the second, again, the streets are crowded; but with people in mourning attire, parading along the thoroughfares in funeral procession to the tombs set up here and there as tributes of respect to the memory of Hassan and Hosein. These tombs are representations of the mausoleum at Kerbela or Meshed,<sup>2</sup>

is confined to the educated classes. The lower-class Sunnis, at any rate in Lucknow, carry their taxiys in procession to the burial ground in as great, if not greater numbers than the Shiaks do.

The disturbances that occasionally occur between the two sects are generally due to the public recitation by the Sunnis of verses in praise of the first three Caliphs.

<sup>1</sup> In Europe these sects are more frequently styled Sonnites and Schiites. The former are distinguished by white, the latter by red turbans. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> A town about sixty miles south-west of Bagdad. [W. K.]

on the banks of the Euphrates, in which the two chiefs were buried; and are either contained in an Emanbarra belonging to a chief, or in the house of some wealthy Mussulman. The tomb-model, or *tazia*, belonging to the king of Oudh, was made for his majesty's father in England; it was composed of green glass with gold mouldings, and was regarded as peculiarly holy.

The Emanbarra is usually erected for the purpose of celebrating the Mohurrim, and is not unfrequently intended, as was the king's, for the final resting-place of the heads of the family to which it belongs. The representation of the tomb of Hassan and Hosein is placed, at the period of Mohurrim, against the wall facing Mecca, under a canopy, which consisted, in the royal Emanbarra, of green velvet embroidered with gold. A pulpit is placed opposite, usually of the same material as the model, in which the reader of the service—the officiating priest, as we should call him—stands with his face to Mecca and his back to the tomb. This pulpit consists simply of a small raised platform, without railing or parapet of any kind, on which the reader sits or stands, as he may find most convenient.

Such is the collection of lustres and chandeliers accumulated on these occasions, the glare of the lights, the sparkling of the rich embroidery and gilding, the glittering of the bullioned fringes, cords, and tassels, ornamenting the banners with which the Emanbarra is hung, the turbaned and bearded figures, with their swarthy countenances expressive of deep-seated grief and humiliation—that Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali might well observe she has 'been frequently reminded in such scenes of the visionary castles conjured up in the imagination by reading the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.'<sup>1</sup> The emblems of Arabic royalty—the embroidered turban, the sun-symbol, and the richly-decorated arms—are always left at the base of the tomb, as evidences of the right of the two youthful martyrs to be considered the heads of 'the faithful'—a right denied by those atrocious heretics, the Soonnies.

<sup>1</sup> *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*, ed. 1917, p. 20. [W. K.]

During the entire period of the Mohurrim, large wax lights, red and green, are kept burning round the tomb, and mourning assemblies are held in the Emanbarra twice a day ; those in the evening being by far the most attractive, and the most generally attended. It was a fine thing to see the king, in his splendid mourning suit, and with a crown on his head decorated with feathers from the bird of paradise, taking his place in front of the reader—his long train of native attendants coming in two by two afterwards, with downcast faces and sorrowing mien, whilst the wax candles and the brilliant chandeliers threw an intense light upon the scene. It was interesting to observe the profound quiet which reigned, until broken by the reader of the service—some favourite Moluvie<sup>1</sup> ; the audience always awaiting the commencement of the reading or the recitation in the same humble and sorrowing attitude in which they entered.

The lights are flaring upon the broad turbans ; the glittering interior of the Emanbarra, with its chandeliers and wax tapers, its gilding and its banners, its fringes and its embroideries, is a blaze of light. The preacher is reciting an account of the death of the two chiefs, his keen black eyes glowing with animation as he proceeds—his audience, at first so solemn and so quietly sad, being gradually wound up to passionate bursts of grief. The orator groans aloud as he recapitulates the disastrous story ; his audience is deeply moved. Tears trickle from the eyes of more than one bearded face, sobs and groans issue from the others. At length, as if with a sudden unpremeditated burst, but really at the proper part of the service, the audience utters forth the names 'Hassan !' 'Hosein !' in succession, beating the breast the while in cadence. At first somewhat gently and in a low tone are the names uttered, but afterwards louder and more loud, until the whole Emanbarra rings again with the excited, prolonged, piercing wail. For fully ten minutes does this burst of grief continue—the beating of the breast, the loud uttering of the names, the beating

<sup>1</sup> *Maulavi*.



ever louder and more resounding, the utterance gradually increasing in shrillness and piercing energy; until in a moment all is hushed again, and silence, as of deep affliction, falls like a pall upon the assembly.

But man requires refreshments after his labour, whether that labour consist in being whirled across a frozen country with a biting east wind in one's teeth, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, or shouting 'Hassan' and 'Hosein' for ten minutes in uninterrupted succession, and beating the breast, with the thermometer at ninety. Sherbet is now handed round. The king and the members of his family indulge in that perfection of smoking—the hookah; whilst the others take a savoury stimulant<sup>1</sup> from their belts and proceed to chew it, until the reading of the service recommences, and the time rolls round again for renewed thumping, renewed shouting of 'Hassan' and 'Hosein,' and a renewed respite. At the conclusion, a funeral dirge is chaunted, called the *Moorseah*<sup>2</sup>; and, being in the vernacular, this portion of the service is much prized by all, because comprehended by all. The *Moorseah* ended, the whole assembly rises, and recapitulates simultaneously the names of all the true leaders of 'the faithful'—the *Emanas*;<sup>3</sup> ending with curses upon the usurping caliphs.<sup>4</sup>

Such is the service performed daily and nightly at the Emanbarra during the Mohurrim; and in the observance of such religious festivals the king was very particular. He had made a vow in early life, as I have before mentioned, that, if ever he came to the throne, he would keep the Mohurrim for forty days, instead of ten, the usual number; and he kept his vow. He lived at such periods entirely with his male Mohammedan relatives or attendants; drinking no wine, giving no dinners, and indulging in none of those luxuries of which he was so fond, and which were regarded as pre-eminently European. His wives had their own Emanbarra within the precincts of the palace, where a female reader went through the service; and I have been assured the beating of

<sup>1</sup> Pân.

<sup>2</sup> *Marsiyah*.

<sup>3</sup> *Imâm*, leader.

<sup>4</sup> i. e. Abu Bakr, Umar, and Usman.

the breast, the shouting of 'Hassan' and 'Hosein', and the cursing of the caliphs is performed with still more energy in these female assemblies than in those of the males. The ladies reserved all their expressions of suffering and woe for the murdered emans at this time. 'We must not indulge selfish sorrows when the Prophet's family alone has a right to our tears,' was their reply to the inquisitive European lady,<sup>1</sup> who wished to know why they seemed, during the Mohurrim, to forget their lost children and their parents.

Nor is it only by their visits to the Emanbarra, and joining in the service, that the Sheah families express their sympathy with, and sorrow for, the sufferings of the lost chiefs. All kind of luxury is put aside during this month of Mohurrim. The commonest and hardest *charpoys*,<sup>2</sup> or a simple mat upon the floor, are substituted for the luxurious cushions and well-wadded mattresses on which they usually recline. Their fare is of the coarsest. Hot curries and savoury pilaws are eschewed, and common barley-bread, rice, and boiled peas, are substituted. The usual ornaments are laid aside—a great deprivation of the ladies' pleasures and comforts; for the contemplation of her jewellery is one of the most pleasing and constant employments of the Indian belle.

In Lucknow they believe they have the metal crest of the banner of Hosein (conveyed thither long ago by a poor pilgrim from the west), and the relic is regarded as peculiarly sacred. The building in which it is contained is called the *Durgah*; and thither the banners used in the Mohurrim are brought by thronging multitudes, with great display, upon the fifth day. The *Durgah* is fully five miles from the king's palace; a magnificent building, in the centre of which the sacred crest is fixed aloft upon a pole, the whole elevated upon a platform hung round with flags and emblematical devices.

On the morning of the fifth day of Mohurrim, crowds of all ranks and classes of the people might be seen issuing from

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> *Chārpāi*, a common native bed, consisting of a framework, laced with coarse cord.

Lucknow to visit the Durgah, each little party bearing its own banners. On such occasions, the orientals love to display their wealth. The procession from the royal Emanbarra was, of course, the most magnificent. Six or eight elephants, with silver trappings, first appeared; the men upon them bearing the banners to be blessed. A guard of soldiers accompanied the elephants. Then came a sort of chief mourner, bearing a black pole supporting two swords hung from a reversed bow. Then came the king himself, and the male members of his family, with his favourite Mohurries. To these succeeded a charger, called Dhull-dhull,<sup>1</sup> the name of the horse Hosein rode when he lost his life. A white Arab, of elegant proportions, was usually employed for this purpose, whose reddened legs and sides (from which arrows, apparently buried in his body, projected) indicated the sufferings of both horse and rider. A turban, in the Arabian style, and a bow and quiver of arrows, are fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-dhull; and a beautifully-embroidered saddle-cloth contrasts finely with the spotless white coat of the animal—the trappings all of solid gold. Attendants, gorgeously dressed, accompany the horse with chowries (for beating away flies) made of the yak's tail. Following Dhull-dhull might be seen troops of the king's servants, regiments of horse and foot, and a crowd of idlers.

The banners are borne through the Durgah, presented to the sacred crest, and touched, and then taken out again at the opposite door to make room for others. All day long does this ceremony continue. Fresh crowds constantly arrive from Lucknow, some waiting till the afternoon in expectation of an easier journey, some delayed by accident. Fifty thousand banners so hallowed in the course of the day I have heard of as being no extraordinary number.

From a burial to a wedding is often but a step in human life, and nowhere is that step shorter than in the East. The Mohurrim, a season of mourning and of grief—of woe,

<sup>1</sup> 'Duldul was the name of the prophet's mule which he gave to 'Ali.'—Mrs. Moor Hassan Ali's *Observations on Mussulmans of India*, ed. 1917, p. 37, note.

depression, and penance—contains also the representation of a wedding! This wedding is commemorated on the seventh day of the fast; the procession preceding it is called the *Mayndieh*. It is held in remembrance of the marriage of the favourite daughter of Hosein to her cousin Cossim<sup>1</sup> on the very day that Hosein lost his life at Kerbela. The *Mayndieh* is a great wedding procession, which sets out at night;<sup>2</sup> that of the inferior being directed towards the Emanbarra of the superior—that of the nawab, or native prime-minister usually directing its course, for instance, to the Emanbarra of the king.

The Emanbarra on this day was fitted up, of course, with extraordinary splendour, worthily to receive the expensive and gorgeous *Mayndieh*; and when the preparations were complete, the public were admitted to gaze upon the glittering, although somewhat *bizarre*, scene. They crowded the vast hall in thousands; some admiring the strangely-varied collection of chandeliers, one of which alone, as I well remember, contained more than a hundred wax-lights; others gazing upon the coloured lamps—amber, blue, and green; others examining the glittering tomb of the emans, with its decorations, a huge lion on one side, and the royal arms, two fish<sup>3</sup> *enbowed and respecting each other* (as the heralds have it), upon the other. The streaming flags astonished the more lively; and the silver representations of the gates of Mecca, of the tent of Hosein, and of the tombs of Kerbela, all placed upon silver tables, gave ample food for thought and calculations to the more sordid;

<sup>1</sup> Kāsim, a ten-year old nephew of Husain, was betrothed to his daughter Fatima.

<sup>2</sup> The *Mayndieh* is the ordinary accompaniment of marriage in the East. It is referred to in the parable of the ten virgins. [W. K.] *Menhdi* is a plant (*Lawsonia Alba*) from the leaves of which a dye (henna) is made, used in marriage ceremonies to colour the hands and feet of bride and bridegroom.

<sup>3</sup> The fish is a symbol of sovereignty, or authority emanating from the sovereign, in Hindoostan, since the time of Timur.—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmans*, p. 43; Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. V. A. Smith, p. 135 sq.

whilst the variety of arms and armour hung round the walls attracted the attention of the warriors. The whole of the decorations were rather showy and glittering than tasteful, exciting not so much admiration of the beauty of the scene as wonder at the display.

But the roll of musketry without has already announced that the wedding procession is advancing—a wedding and a burial both performed in one day, and strangely commemorated together; for Cossim was buried the day he was married. The roll of musketry has sounded, and the king's messengers come in, in great numbers, to clear the hall. They know their duty, and what is expected of them; whilst the people, on their part, still linger around the objects of their contemplations. Hustling and friendly pushing will not do—the gazers have not yet feasted their eyes, and *will* not be hustled out. How London policemen would clear the place of the fierce-looking, well-bearded, and well-armed Mussulmans I do not know; but the king's messengers and peons adopt a very summary method of procedure. They have three times announced with a loud voice that the place must be cleared; and still hundreds are gathered round the tombs and round the silver models, and many gaping admirers still contemplate the dazzling lights. There is no time to be lost, and messengers and peons proceed forthwith to enforce the departure of the more tardy. Their bamboos are flourished, and well-thonged whips are produced. Blows resound upon the backs of the lagging gazers—good sturdy blows often, by no means a joke—and the recipients growl and move on. Not a loiterer, however, returns the salute—the messengers and the peons have right upon their side; this whipping and flagellation is the *dustoor*, the custom, and therefore must be right. Occasionally a more than ordinarily severe stroke elicits a sudden facing round of the well-bearded *floggee*; whilst the flogger still flourishes his cane or his whip, and looks the indignant sufferer full in the face. *Donkeys* and *dogs*, and even *pigs* (the most opprobrious of epithets to the ear of a Mussulman), they will call each other in irritated

and rapid colloquy ; but still the loiterer moves on towards the door, however loudly or fiercely he may retort in words, rubbing the outraged part the while manfully, and wagging his beard violently in indignant remonstrance ; without any answering blow, however—no angry retaliation comes from the hand or dagger. Custom has decided the matter, and custom and right are synonymous cast of the Indus.

And now all is ready for the wedding procession, which has been gradually drawing near. The Emanbarra is silent again. The doors by which the people went out are closed, and the vast quadrangle in front, brilliantly lit up, is thrown open. The elephants and horses are left without ; but the crowd of soldiers, and bearers of presents, and attendant musicians, almost fill up the spacious square—the beautifully tessellated pavement is completely hidden.

First, through the lines of soldiers, filing to the right and left, are borne in the wedding presents. Richly-decorated attendants advance, carrying silver trays laden with sweetmeats and dried fruits, miniature beds of flowers, and garlands of sweet jasmine ; whilst fireworks are let off as they enter the doors. A covered conveyance—that of the bride—the exterior of silver, such as is used by the highest of the female nobility, follows the wedding presents, accompanied by richly-decorated attendants bearing torches. Then come the bands of music, with other torch-bearers ; and amid glad sounds the whole procession enters, and makes the round of the vast hall. The presents are deposited near the model of the tomb, in readiness to be taken to the place of burial a few days after. But scarcely has the richly-decorated wedding procession passed into the Emanbarra, when another company, with downcast countenances and in mourning garb, draws nigh. The wedding and the death occurred on the same day, and so the funeral pomp follows hard upon the Mayndieh.

The model of the tomb of Cossim, duly supported on a bier, is brought in by the attendants, and a sad mourning procession accompanies it. Sometimes even a horse, duly

trained for the purpose, accompanies the party. It is regarded as the horse of Cossim, and bears his embroidered turban, his scimitar, his bow and arrows; whilst over it is held a royal umbrella, the emblem of sovereignty, and a gorgeously-worked *astadah*, or sun-symbol.<sup>1</sup> The horse, if he be admitted to the interior, is one, of course, upon which dependence can be placed; and makes the round of the spacious hall with a solemnity and steadiness of gait befitting the occasion.

So much for what goes on within, where the usual service succeeds to the processions. But there is a part of the ceremony proceeding without the court-yard, infinitely more to the taste of the populace than the gloom and distress which characterize the principal actors in the funeral scene. Without the court-yard—for that is a place which may not be desecrated by the great unwashed—crowds have collected of all ages and of both sexes; there is crushing and amusement, laughter and groaning and oburgation, as in all crowds. They are awaiting the distribution of coin, which always accompanies a wedding, and which is never omitted upon the occasion of the Mayn-dich commemorating the marriage of Cossim and the daughter of Hosein. Small silver coins are scattered right and left by officers appointed for the purpose, with a lavish expenditure that would astonish the European. It is a part of the religion of the Mussulman to be liberal at such a time, and he cares not for the cost.

It is on record at Lucknow, that one of these Mohurrims cost a reigning nawab upwards of three hundred thousand pounds; the costly nature of the processions and trappings—the munificence to the poor—the lavish display of expensive dresses and appointments, never used again, need not astonish us therefore. The wealth of the Mohammedan population of any part of India may be safely estimated by the displays they make at Mohurrim. Were all this

<sup>1</sup> An imitation of the sun, embroidered in gold upon crimson velvet; both sides alike; fixed upon a circular framework, which is borne aloft upon a gold or silver staff. [W. K.]

valuable mourning and embroidery, this display of silvering and gilding, to be retained from year to year to be used at each successive Mohurrim, the expense would be very different. Such, however, is not the case; what has once been used is not permitted to be used again. All is distributed amongst the poor and needy on the conclusion of the fast; so that the populace do not want incitement to make the commemoration of the Mohurrim as enthusiastic as possible.

But we have not yet ended with the season of gloom and despondency. All these services at the Emanbarras—all this consecration of banners, and parading of wedding and funeral processions, is but preliminary to a final display of a still more imposing character. The emans lie dead—their deaths alone have been hitherto commemorated—that is, the deaths of Hassan and Hosein. Their funeral and the burial have yet to come; for this funeral vast preparations have been made, whilst for the burial, an imitation of the burial-ground at Kerbela has been duly set apart by each family of large possessions ages before.

These burial-grounds<sup>1</sup> are all at a considerable distance from the walls of the town; and at the earliest dawn of day the populace issues forth in thousands, to witness or to take part in the various ceremonies which accompany the burial of the tomb-models, together with the food and other articles always put into a Mohammedan grave.

As the funeral of Hosein was a military spectacle, so, on this occasion, is every endeavour made to give as military a character as possible to the display. Banners are exhibited, bands play, matchlocks and guns and pistols are fired off, shields are clashed together, and no sound is wanting which serves to bring before the mind's eye the mimicry of military pageants. The poor man, with his little company, falls into the rear of the rich man's larger assembly, that he may get

<sup>1</sup> There are at present four such burial grounds at Lucknow, two of which, Māhānagar and Pul Katara, are reserved for Sunnis. Tal-Katara is similarly reserved for Shīahs, whilst that at Aish Bagh is used both by Shīahs and Sunnis.



on the faster thereby ; for the crowds are dense, and the smaller bands have no little difficulty in making a way for themselves. Besides, some of those heretical Soonnies may be lying in wait, to attack or to interrupt ; for they, miserable unbelievers ! regard the whole display as worse than foolish, as almost impious, in fact.

Each procession is marshalled much in the same order : first, the consecrated banners, carried aloft upon long poles, the bearers of the poles usually seated in an elephant-howdah. The larger displays will have two or three, or even six elephants so employed. A band of music, discoursing such dirges as their instruments will accomplish and custom prescribes, follows the elephants ; where all are playing, procession jostling procession, company pressing against company, each with its band, it may be easily imagined that the sounds produced are not of the most harmonious. The sword bearer—with the two glittering blades hung aloft upon a black pole and suspended beneath a reversed bow, near its summit—comes after the band. He is supported by men on each side, who also bear aloft black poles, to which are attached streamers of long black unspun silk.

Then comes the horse—*Dhull-dhull*—as on the former occasion of the consecration of the banners, attended by numerous servants. Two grooms hold the bridle, one upon either side ; an officer marches at his head with the sun-symbol ; another holds over him a royal umbrella ; others accompany him with gilt and silvered staves, whilst running messengers follow with small triangular green banners. The chain armour, gold-embroidered turban, sword and belt, are all fixed upon the saddle of *Dhull-dhull* ; whilst often the owner of the animal, and head of the procession, walks after the horse as a sort of chief mourner. A walk of some miles amid such streaming crowds is by no means a pleasant journey.

The bearers of incense, in gold and silver censers, succeed. The censers are suspended by means of chains made of the same material, and are thus waved to and fro, as the march

proceeds—much as they are waved at the foot of the altar in Roman Catholic cathedrals on the Continent. The *lahbaun*,<sup>1</sup> a sweet-smelling resin, which is burnt in the censers, is probably the very frankincense so frequently mentioned in the Bible. The reader of the funeral service follows, usually attended by the proprietor of the tomb-model and his friends. Always barefooted, and often without any covering upon their heads, do these mourners follow in sad procession. It is no unusual thing to see their heads disfigured with chaff and dust—the more striking symbols of profound grief.

The tomb-model, or tazia, is borne next; above which a canopy of green cloth or velvet, embroidered with gold or silver in the more showy processions, is spread, elevated upon poles, and carried by several men stationed at the side. The model of Cossim's tomb; the covered conveyance of his bride; the trays of wedding presents, with all the other accompaniments of the marriage procession, follow in order; and lastly, camels and elephants, bearing representations of the tent equipage and warlike train of Hosein, as he marched from Medina to Kerbela.

These are all the parts of the procession proper; but, in addition to these, oriental charity always demands a train of elephants, the howdahs on which are filled with confidential servants distributing bread and money amongst the poor. The bread so distributed is believed by the Mussulman ladies to possess certain peculiar virtues of its own, very superior to those of the ordinary staff of life. They will commission their servants to bring them a morsel of such, even though they may themselves distribute, or cause to be distributed, large quantities! Its being given on the great day of the Mohurrim constitutes it holy, sacred, and peculiar.

All along the march, as the various processions wind by different roads over the country, guns, pistols, rifles, and

<sup>1</sup> *Loban*, frankincense. 'The Greek word is *libanos*, from Hebrew *labonah*; Arabic *luban*, meaning "white".—v. *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, ed. Schoff, p. 120 and *passim*.

matchlocks, are discharged; whilst the mourning cry, 'Hassan! Hosein!' is heard at intervals swelling out from the mighty throng.

The ordinary ceremony of burial is gone through on the procession reaching the appointed place—the model of the burial-ground at Kerbela. The tomb-model, with its various accompaniments of wedding trays and wedding presents—fruits, flowers, and incense—all are committed to the earth, a grave having been previously prepared for the purpose. It is at this part of the ceremony that the long pent-up animosity between the Sheahs and the Soonnies usually finds vent, and the mimic burial is often made the occasion of loss of life and bloody feuds between the contending factions.

It must be remembered, that this fast of the Mohurrim is quite distinct from the Ramazan.<sup>1</sup> The Ramazan—a period of thirty days, during which all 'the faithful' abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking, between sunrise and sunset—is observed by all classes of Mohammedans, by the Indian Mussulman on the banks of the Ganges, equally with the Fezzan on the shores of the Atlantic in Northern Africa. The Mohurrim, however, is peculiar to the Sheahs, and properly only extends over ten days. The devout commemorate it for forty, just as the zealots of both sects will fast during the month preceding and that succeeding the Ramazan.

During such periods, as I have already remarked, we seldom saw the king in private. He held his morning durbar as usual, and we were in attendance; but often even this would be intermitted, and all public business suspended for the time being. Did we require an audience of his majesty, to lay any matter of urgency before him, which was an unusual thing, we saw him when he was dressing—in the hands of his European favourite, having his hair dressed.

On one occasion, in one of those mad freaks which despotic

<sup>1</sup> Muharram is the first, Ramazan the ninth month of the Moham-madan calendar.

power and defective early training had made habitual with him, he attended the Emanbarra, during the Mohurrim, in his ordinary European dress, his black London hat in his hand. The act was regarded as a great scandal by the Mussulmans, and profound heads and long beards were shaken solemnly as the owners discoursed about it. We, the European members of the household, were just as ready to condemn such conduct, and to advise his majesty to adopt a different course, as his native counsellors; but advice was thrown away—counsel was lost upon him, unless it coincided with the whim of the moment. I am aware that in the residency we were regarded as the suggesters of all these mad freaks. The resident knew as well what went on in the palace on public occasions as we did; but he could never know whether any such escapade was the result of the king's own caprice, or the suggestion of the 'favourites.' He believed the latter; and the *Calcutta Review*, as well as other Indian periodicals, have since most unjustly denounced us as the aiders and abettors of extravagances which we should have prevented if we could, and which we often condemned as heartily as our vilifiers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FAREWELL TO LUCKNOW

The barber again—The king's uncle—His majesty's treatment of them—Cruelty—Indignation—Departure from the dinner-table—The barber goes to Calcutta—Virtuous resolutions of the king—The barber's return and triumph—Our dismissal.

THE circumstances which led to my departure from Lucknow, and not mine only, but that of another member of the household, higher in the king's esteem than ever I was, will not take long to tell. The influence of the barber was daily becoming greater. It was very perceptible that the hero of the curling-tongs was in fact the real ruler of Oudh ; and even the attention of the resident was gradually being directed to the subject. No one could live in Lucknow, in fact, without being aware, that if any man wished to succeed at court he must first win the favour of the barber. Several causes conduced to this ascendancy. The low, depraved tastes which the king had contracted during years of unrestrained indulgence, and an almost boundless command of wealth, were just those which the barber found it his interest to foster and encourage. He made himself necessary to the king ; and he had the art, whilst he really led and suggested, always to appear to follow and to *be* led. Every bottle of wine or beer consumed in the palace put something into his pocket ; it was his interest, therefore, to prevent the king's reformation in respect of drunkenness. Every favoured slave, every dancing-girl who attracted the king's notice, paid tribute of his or her earnings into the open palm of the barber. Even the nawab, and the commander-in-chief of the king's forces, found it their interest to conciliate the reigning favourite with valuable presents. Can it be wondered at, then, that he fostered abuses by which he thrived, when his low sordid nature is taken into consideration ?

To us of the king's household these abuses were apparent enough ; and I believe we were all honestly anxious to correct them. The will was there, but the means were wanting ; and though we consulted together on the subject, yet no feasible plan presented itself. One of the most influential took it upon him to remonstrate with the king upon his continual inebriety ; and he swore, fumed, was calmed, promised amendment, and forgot his promise. By such means the hands of the barber were strengthened only, not at all weakened—that was quite plain.

That a strong feeling of enmity prevailed between the king and his uncles,<sup>1</sup> I have already had occasion to observe. He never forgave them for having conspired, together with his father, to prevent his gaining the musnud. When he invited any one of them to his private dinners, it was usually that they might become intoxicated and be insulted. The facts I am about to relate may appear scarcely credible ; but they are literally true. Such scenes cannot fade from the memory ; and I shall describe them as they occurred.

One of these aged uncles was invited to the king's private table. He was well plied with wine, and forced unwillingly to drink far more than he could well stand. The barber saw that the king enjoyed the poor old man's distress at the condition into which he himself perceived he was fast falling.

'Let us have a Scotch reel,' suggested the little hero of the comb and brush ; 'and I will dance with Saadat.' Saadat was the king's uncle.

His majesty was delighted. He seized at the idea forthwith. 'Good, good !' he cried, as he pushed back his chair and prepared for the dance—'good, good, let the khan dance with my dear uncle.'

<sup>1</sup> The Oudh Papers give a list of the royal family dated July 3, 1837, which mentions eight sons of Sa'adat Ali Khan, besides Ghaziuddin Haider, viz. Shamsu-d-daulah (d. 1814), Nasiru-d-daulah, Saduck Ali Khan (? Sa'adat), Kazim Ali Khan, Jafar Ali Khan, Husain Ali Khan (dead), Jalalu-d-daulah (dead), Ruknu-d-daulah.

The whole room was forthwith in an uproar. The dancing-girls continued their performances at one end, whilst the king pretended to dance, as he watched the fiendish little barber and his uncle. The poor old man was helpless in the brawny arms of the favourite, and was whirled round and round until he could hardly stand. The king laughed until tears stood in his eyes. During an interval in the wild reel, the barber knocked off the turban of the old uncle. Amongst natives, the loss of the turban is an indelible disgrace. Drunken as he was, the panting grey-headed old man was wroth at the insult, and felt for his dagger.

In an instant that too was seized by the barber, and taken from him before he could draw it; then his belt, then his shawl-girdle, then his outer coat of cloth-of-gold. Article after article of clothing was torn from him. Two of us offered to protect the helpless old man. The king was furious at our interference.

'Stand back, gentlemen; let the fun proceed, or, by heaven, I shall put you in arrest,' shouted the half-drunken sovereign, still delighted with the performances of his favourite.

In a few minutes the grey-headed old man stood in the centre of the apartment divested of every particle of clothing—a laughing-stock to the king and his detestable minion and the attendant slaves. Water was thrown over him by the king's orders: he was struck, too; not violently, but in jeering mockery, by his wild torturers. It was a pitiable sight to see him, covering his face with his hands, and shedding bitter tears, drunk though he was, at his disgrace.

'And we sat by to see all that done—sat by without interfering!' you exclaim naturally, good reader. We made the effort to interfere more than once, and were roughly ordered to desist; nay, stout swordsmen were even ordered up into the apartment to prevent our interference. At length we could stand it no longer, but indignantly took our leave, giving the king but scanty courtesy as we did so; nor was his majesty disposed to be

over-courteous to us that night, for he resented our interference.

What went on after we left the apartment we heard subsequently. The king insisted upon the poor old man dancing as he then was, and the barber was his partner; whilst servants, male and female, of all grades, collected together to witness the humiliation of the king's uncle. The revel proceeded until Nussir felt too much the influence of the wine he had taken to continue it any longer. Then, and only then, was the persecuted man released.

In native states such as Oudh the king is everything; his nearest relatives are of no more consequence or importance than the meanest of the people. A man who chances to please the king with a song, or a girl who captivates him with a dance, is more honoured and attended to than the king's brother or mother. Possessing absolute power of life and death, the sovereign must not be thwarted in his fits of merriment and cruelty, or it fares worse for the poor sufferers afterwards. What was intended as a short-lived jest, may become a long-continued source of suffering, if the anger of majesty is roused, particularly if roused by Europeans; for he cannot wreak his vengeance on the latter, and so it falls with double force upon the poor native. When Buktawir Singh was ordered to be decapitated for his senseless witticism, as narrated in a previous chapter, his only fear was, that we of the European household should interfere on his behalf. 'Had you done so,' he subsequently remarked to me, 'no power on earth could have saved my life.'

Such, then, was the treatment of the king's uncle Saadut, on the occasion I have described. We were witnesses before that to a similar scene. The victim then, however, was a youthful dancing-girl, not a grey-headed old man; and although she protested and exclaimed, nay, fought valiantly in her own defence, yet the barber, the agent and instigator in both cases, succeeded in making the king very merry at the plight to which he had reduced her. Her nominal husband was one of the singers in the room at the



time—for the nautch-girls are always accompanied by singers; and the wretch, when he saw that the freak was pleasing to his majesty, lent his assistance to the barber. So complete is the demoralization of men who attend about the courts of absolute monarchs!

These instances were bad enough, and we showed the king that we regarded them as witless cruelties—nay, that we were indignant at them; but he cared little for our disapprobation or our indignation. What happened afterwards was worse.

Another of the uncles, Asoph by name, more infirm and aged than Saadut, was invited to join the king's dinner-party. We assembled in an ante-room, waiting for the two *great* men of the court, the king and the barber. Asoph was with us; and taking me a little aside, he spoke softly, so as not to be overheard.

'What does the king want with me?' he asked.

'Only to dine with him, I believe,' was my answer.

'Alas, am I not old? is not my hair grey, and my eye watery? I am not a companion for my nephew, who is young and fond of pleasure. It is a bad sign, boding nothing but evil, when he invites any of us.'

There was a pathos in the old man's words, as he gave utterance to his complaint in musical Hindustani. I was touched with his sorrow.

'Do not fear,' I replied; 'the king entertained your son the other day, and treated him well.'

'My son was not in Oudh when Nussir's father died, nor when Ghazi-u-deen made us promise to oppose his son's elevation to the throne. Nussir has no spite against my son. Would to God he would let me live at home in peace and quietness! Has he not all Lucknow, and what it contains, to make him happy?'

The king approached, leaning upon the arm of his favourite, and saluted us right royally as he entered; for there was a certain dignity about him. He fixed his keen black eyes upon Asoph and me, and drew near to us.

'Welcome, my uncle Asoph,' said he, extending his hand; 'we have missed you too long at our table.'

'Your slave is honoured by your majesty's smile,' said Asoph, timidly taking the proffered hand.

'Let me lead you to the table myself, Asoph,' said the king, as they walked off.

We followed. Everything was as usual. The king occupied his elevated armchair at the middle of one side of the table. We sat in our accustomed places to the right and left of him. Asoph was placed exactly opposite the king; no one else sitting upon that side. When the king invited any native to the table, he usually occupied the place in which Asoph now sat, facing his majesty.

A bottle of Madeira was opened, and placed beside Asoph. The soup was dispatched, the fish came, the more substantial viands were brought. The king drank wine with Asoph; and the old man seemed reassured, and quaffed his wine with gusto, stroking his long wiry grey moustache, after his habit when pleased.

'You do not drink wine with my uncle,' said the king to one of our little party, and then in succession to each of us. Asoph drank his glass of wine at each challenge, and seemed to enjoy it. After the fourth or fifth replenishing, however, he put down his glass half-empty only. The king noticed it, and, looking his uncle full in the face, asked somewhat sternly—

'Is not the wine good at my table?'

Asoph declared it was excellent, as he drank the portion he had left.

The dinner proceeded, and at length the dessert was placed upon the table; and with the dessert came the usual amusements—tumblers and the nautch-girls were those of that night. They were little attended to by the king, however; his eyes were fixed upon Asoph.

The bottle of Madeira which had been originally placed before him was now nearly empty.

'Do you not see that Asoph Nawab wants wine?' said the king, turning to the barber; 'get him another bottle.'

A meaning look passed between the favourite and his master, as the former went to get a bottle for the old man. It was in vain that Asoph protested that he did not want any more, stroking down his moustache harder than ever; he was not comfortable then, and yet he was exhilarated with the wine he had taken.

There were plenty of servants about. The barber's going out to get a bottle convinced me that some treachery was intended. Subsequent inquiries elicited the information that the bottle brought in for the doomed Asoph was half brandy, half Madeira. The servant, who had assisted the barber, himself confessed the fact to me.

The king gave various toasts—'his brother the king of England,' first; 'his friend the governor-general of India' next—and was in great vein. Asoph was forced to drink, and gradually lost all power of directing himself. He sat unsteadily in his armchair, his head now bowing to the right, now to the left, as he tried hard to keep his eyelids from falling. He was soon nearly blind drunk.

The king was delighted; and turning in a pleasant way to his favourite, made some observation about the drooping head of the unfortunate old man.

'His moustache wants arranging now,' was the barber's reply, as he half rose.

'Go, good khan, and settle it; chuck it into its place vigorously,' said the king, laughing.

The barber rose, and pulled the long moustache at either side ruthlessly, turning the head, as he did so, first one way, then the other. It was barbarous usage for any one, but particularly for an aged, infirm, grey-headed man. We exclaimed against it, two of us half rising from our chairs as we did so. The king turned upon us furiously. 'Leave your places at your peril!' he exclaimed; 'is not the old pigmy uncle? I and the khan shall do with him as we please.'

It was useless to interfere—worse than useless; it might but bring down greater punishment upon the luckless old man. Asoph's head still moved unsteadily. He had opened his eyes widely, smarting with pain at the violent

wrench given to his moustache ; but soon relapsed into his old nodding see-saw motion. Drunkenness had quite overpowered him. For a little the king seemed intent upon the performance of the tumblers and the dancing-girls, his brows still knit and his eyes angry. He had not forgotten our exclamations.

The old man's head, as it moved from side to side, obstructed the king's vision occasionally.

'His head must be kept quiet, d—n him !' shouted the irritated sovereign.

The barber was on his feet in a moment. He procured a piece of strong fine twine and with it he approached the drunken Asoph. Dividing the twine into two equal parts, he tied one end of each piece firmly in each moustache. We could not conceive what his object was. The king looked on delighted. The ingenuity of the thing pleased him. A man who had not been accustomed to wield the razor, the comb and brush, and the curling-tongs, would never have tied those pieces of cord so firmly in the long wiry hair. But what was to be done with the other ends ? We were not left long in doubt. The old man opened his eyes once or twice during the operation, and uttered inarticulate sounds. But the wine and brandy he had taken were too powerful for him, and he speedily relapsed into unconsciousness.

We were not left long in doubt as to the intention of the barber. He tied the ends of the twine, one to each arm of the chair on which the old man sat—tied them firmly, caring little to what inconvenience he put the king's uncle. The performances of the nautch-girls and the tumblers went on as before. They appeared to pay no attention to what passed at the table.

The king clapped his hands and laughed loudly at the ingenious device of his favourite. With each moustache tied firmly to an arm of the chair on which he sat, Asoph's head drooped in drunken lethargy upon his breast. The king whispered the favourite after a little. The little man rose and left the apartment. I felt convinced that some new cruelty was about being practised, and looked mean-

ingly at my friend—he who had introduced me into Nussir's service—the most influential European at court, the barber always excepted. He saw my indignant glance, and understood it. For a moment he sat irresolute ; and then rising said calmly to the king—

‘ I will release your majesty's uncle. This is disgraceful.’

‘ Leave the room !’ shouted the king, enraged beyond all bounds, swearing and stamping as he spoke ; ‘ leave the room, sir ! Am I not master in my own house ? in my own palace ? Leave the room ; and any other gentleman who is disposed to interfere between me and my uncle may accompany you.’

I rose, bowed, and followed my friend. The idea of using force was ridiculous. We retreated together to the door of the apartment, and left the room. We heard subsequently what occurred after our departure. The barber reappeared with some fireworks just after we had left. The fireworks were let off under the old man's chair. The legs of the unfortunate uncle were intentionally scorched and burnt ; and he seized the arms of the chair with his hands, and started to his feet. Two locks of hair were torn from his upper lip as he did so, and a portion of the skin with them. The blood flowed freely from the wound, and the drunkenness of the sufferer disappeared. He left the room, thanking the king for his entertainment, and regretting that the bleeding of his nose prevented him from remaining. All this was dissimulation. He knew that he had been barbarously treated—knew it right well ; but he was too good a courtier to allow his indignation to appear.

The king laughed louder than ever ; but his European friends were silent. None laughed at all but the barber ; and then even he seemed alarmed at the result of his freak. There was little merriment at the royal table during the rest of that night, and the king retired early.

As for my friend and me, we had gone directly to Constantia, the residence built by General Martine, and now appropriated to travellers as an Eastern *serai*, where rooms are to be had by European travellers free of cost, but no

attendance or food. We had gone there to secure apartments; for we were living in the king's houses, and expected an order to vacate them and leave his service forthwith. No such order came, however.

The insults so frequently received at the king's hands had at length roused the active enmity of all his family. The retainers of his uncles and cousins became the terror of the king's servants. All Lucknow was in an uproar. The royal troops were beaten by the insurgents; and the king demanded assistance of the resident—the Company's troops at the cantonments would soon reduce the rebels to order. The resident refused to allow of their being so employed, remonstrated with the king, and advised him to come to some accommodation with his relatives, offering himself to be the mediator.

After a week of utter confusion, all was arranged. The durbars were held as usual, and we resumed our stations in the household, our previous absence passing unnoticed.

It was not more than a fortnight after this, when the barber was sent by the king on a mission to Calcutta. I forget its immediate object, probably to procure new lustres, or chandeliers, or wine. The favourite's brother, a recent arrival in Lucknow, was left behind, but had no influence. Now or never, thought we, is the time to overthrow the barber—now or never. My introducer to the court had been one of the most intimate and respected friends of the king; and he was determined to make a vigorous effort, during the absence of the favourite, to prevent the king relapsing into his old habits on the barber's return. In many private conversations he represented forcibly the evil that was being done, as well to the reputation as to the health of his majesty himself, by his continual inebriety. The king listened to it all like a whipped schoolboy; nay, even shed tears more than once.

'It is true—it is too true,' he would exclaim, 'I am a drunkard, a d—d drunkard; and everybody knows it. But it's all the khan's doing. Wallah, but he does what he likes with me!'

After many such conversations, the king determined that, on the barber's return, he should be kept in his own station—that he should not again be permitted to join our party at dinner; that, in fact, he was to be favourite no longer. This resolution was communicated to us all by the king himself; and we congratulated him on it, assuring him that his own dignity, the honour of his kingdom, and, what he valued far more, his health, required this change.

'Gentlemen,' said he, knowingly, 'you don't know how firm I can be when I like. I'll show the khan—fat pig that he is—that I am not going to be led by the nose any longer; you shall see, you shall see—let us have a glass of claret now.'

For a week after this resolution was formed we dined constantly at the royal party, and no one left the table in a state of intoxication. The court of Oudh was becoming quite moral and respectable.

At length the news was brought to us one morning that the barber had arrived in Lucknow the preceding night. We were most anxious to know what would be the result. It was quite true; the barber had arrived, and attended the king early that very morning. We attended the private *darbar*. The king's head was in the hands of the favourite; I thought I saw a sneer of triumph on the countenance of the little man as we entered. He saluted us cordially, however; and we returned his salutation. The king asked him of Calcutta, of his purchases, of the governor-general, of the shipping, of the steamers; and the barber answered with his wonted discretion.

'I fear the king will never keep his promise,' said my friend, as we walked together towards our elephant to return home.

'If he does not, our days in Lucknow are numbered,' was my reply.

'Yes,' he answered, 'it would be impossible to remain here, if things go on as they have been. No honest man could stand it.'

It was decided between us that, if the barber took his

usual place at the table that day, I should also take mine, to see the result, whilst my friend should refuse to join the party.

There was no doubt that evening in our mind that the barber had resumed all his former influence—no doubt whatever. We saw the king approach the ante-room, leaning on his arm as before. My friend left at once, and returned to his house on the other side of the Goomty.

We entered the dining-room as usual after the king. He affected not to have observed the absence of one of his principal courtiers until we were seated at the table.

‘Where is our friend?’ he asked.

‘He has returned home, your majesty,’ was my reply.

‘Ha—has he so! Wallah, but that was badly done! Let him be sent for.’

A messenger was dispatched across the river forthwith to my friend’s house in the park. The dinner proceeded—the barber occupying his usual place, and performing his usual duties.

The messenger returned.

‘Where is he?’ asked the king.

‘The sahib sent his compliments and duty to the “refuge of the world,”’ said the *hurkaru*,<sup>1</sup> or messenger, ‘and begs to be excused.’

‘By my father’s beard, but he shall not be excused! Go back, you dog, and tell him he *must* come.’

The messenger salaamed low, and departed again.

The more substantial viands gave place to curry and rice. The savoury dish was perfuming the room when the *hurkaru* again entered.

‘Well!’ shouted the king in an angry voice; for the messenger was salaaming instead of speaking.

‘The sahib hopes that the “asylum of the universe” will not command him to come;—the “asylum of the universe,” says the sahib, knows why his slave cannot come.’ Such was the message.

<sup>1</sup> *Harkārā*.



The king struck his fork down violently upon the table. He always did so when vexed.

'Go back, go again,' he exclaimed vehemently, 'and tell the sahib I shall come myself and bring him here, if he does not come. He would not treat his own king so; why does he me? Go, go.'

A third time the messenger departed. Dessert was on the table, and a puppet-show was endeavouring to delight the 'asylum of the world' when he returned again. This time, however, the sahib heralded his own approach; and the messenger contented himself with advancing to the threshold, as though he would say, 'There he is; you see I have brought him.'

'Come,' said the king when he saw him, 'come, my friend, sit down, and take a glass of wine with me. Yah Hyder, but there has been trouble enough to bring you here;' and the king pointed as he spoke to the vacant seat.

'Your majesty must pardon me,' was the reply; 'I told your majesty I should never sit down to table again with *that* man,' pointing to the barber, 'and I will not.'

'Pooh, pooh! nonsense, my friend. Sit down, sit down. Bring a bottle of champagne for us.'

But it was in vain that the king coaxed. The indignant Englishman was not to be wheedled, and replied firmly, again reminding the king of his promise.

'Boppery bopp!' exclaimed the distressed sovereign, 'but what trouble you give me!' Here his majesty rose from his chair; and ordering the barber and the captain of the guard to follow, he took the refractory courtier with him into an adjoining ante-room.

A long conversation was the result—criminating and re-criminating on both sides. The barber threw himself upon the goodness of the king; the refractory sahib took care to remind his majesty of his plighted word; the captain tried to act as peacemaker. As to the king, he was perplexed, and said little or nothing. At length he proposed that they should all join him in the dining-room in tumbler-bumpers of champagne, and therein drown their quarrels. To this

my friend would by no means consent ; and the king then, feeling that he had exhausted all means of reconciliation, sighed, swore a little, threatened, took the barber's arm, and walked into the dining-room. The captain of the guard followed. The refractory courtier returned home.

'He is gone,' said the king, looking round the room again.

'His place can be easily supplied,' suggested the favourite.

'Let him go, d—n him ; to be sure it can.' And there it appeared as if the matter ended. But it was not to end there. My turn was to come next.

As the king's eye looked over his guests at his table, it rested upon me. I was watching him at the time. Our eyes met. He turned quickly from me, and, putting his hand towards a bottle, muttered something about a glass of wine. I filled my glass, and the king filled his. His hand was on it, his head was turned towards me again, but with a pleasant expression no longer. His eyes flashed angrily. I raised my glass, and was muttering as usual, 'God bless your majesty'—such was the etiquette. But before the sentence was uttered, the king pettishly pushed his glass from him, spilling the wine, whilst he thundered forth in an angry tone, 'No, sir, I will not drink wine with you. You are a friend of his.'

'Your majesty was a friend of his but yesterday,' was my reply, 'and told him then how much you valued him.'

'Do you hear him ?' exclaimed the irritated despot ; 'do you hear him ? Why does he dare to speak to me that way ?'

'Your majesty is fond of Englishmen,' I replied ; 'they speak their mind sometimes. But my presence is distasteful ; I have delayed too long.'

I arose as I spoke, and walked towards the door. I heard the king swearing and striking the table violently with his fork as I went out.

That very night my friend received an order to leave the king's house, in which he lived. The messengers were commanded to throw his property out of it if he delayed ; but the nawab was not disposed to execute these orders harshly. He had a wholesome fear of Europeans ; and his servants assisted in removing the various articles to Constantia, where

apartments had already been taken for the discarded courtier and his family.

As for me, my removal was speedily accomplished. Unencumbered as I was by wife or family, I was not long in having everything I possessed removed. Before morning dawned, we were both lodged in Constantia, and had placed ourselves under the protection of the resident, who communicated with the nawab on the subject, reminding him that for any injury that befel us he should be held responsible.

We remained quietly together for a few days in Constantia. When our arrangements had all been made, we sailed down the Goomty to the Ganges, and were speedily on our way to Calcutta.

Such was the end of my experience of royal favour. A few words will suffice to complete the history as well of the barber as of the king.

During the visit to Calcutta, the particulars of which I have related above, it appears to have been the barber's intention to quit India altogether. He had large sums of money safely deposited in Company's stock, he was too knowing a man not to perceive that his position was altogether an uncertain one, and he had resolved to quit Lucknow for good, before the king's capricious favour was at an end. Doubtless, as a preparatory step, he had, some time before, sent for a brother from England, who of course informed him of all that took place in his absence. The reformation we had caused was matter of conversation as well in the residency as in the court. The favourite had probably hoped that his brother might succeed him as hairdresser and park-ranger, but he had miscalculated either the king's powers of fickleness, or his brother's powers of pleasing.

Reinstated in his authority and favour the barber ruled, on our departure, with a more despotic sway than ever. Unbridled licence resumed its rule in the court. The scenes which occurred in the palace were whispered over India. 'All decency and propriety,' says the *Calcutta Review*, 'were banished from the court. Such was more than once the king's conduct at this period, that Colonel Lowe, the resident,

refused to see him, or to transact business with his minions.'

But amid all this riot and licence, the king regretted our departure. He saw that the barber was making a tool of him, and inwardly chafed at his position. On more than one occasion he openly reproached the favourite for the loss of the only two friends who were capable of giving him good advice. The barber saw the approaching storm, and prepared for it. His brother did not succeed in winning the king's favour, and Nussir-u-deen at length saw that the intention was to surround him only by the creatures of his bad advisers. A European chief butler (*darogah of the kitchen* was his official title) had been added to the court, and this chief butler was the favourite's *protégé*. The two other European members of the household became mere nonentities in the palace—the barber, his brother, and the chief butler, were the sole possessors of power and influence.

At length things came to a climax. The resident was daily becoming more and more weary of the disorder which reigned in the court. His representations became stronger and more frequent. The king was waxing irritable and uneasy. Doubtless there were not wanting natives in the harem who whispered into his majesty's ear words about the barber which they would not have dared to utter openly or loudly. 'You have driven away the only good counsellors I had,' at length exclaimed the king to the favourite one day, in a fit of anger, 'and now you think you can do what you like with me—you and your brother. But you will find yourselves mistaken, and that before long. The resident is quite right, you are the evil genius that has made the palace what it is.'

The barber became alarmed at this, and at some new and threatening arrangements, which seemed to have for their object the dispensing with some of the creatures whom he had appointed. He fled precipitately one night to Cawnpore. There he was within the Company's territories, and safe from the king's anger.<sup>1</sup> When Nussir-u-deen heard that the

<sup>1</sup> The *Literary Gazette* of September 29, 1855, in noticing this work, gives a different account of the barber's flight. The above,

favourite had fled, he sent officers forthwith to his house, imprisoned his brother and his son, and confiscated all his property. The brother and the son would probably have been executed had it not been for the resident. As it was they remained in durance vile for ten days, until the king and his prime minister had made an end of confiscation. The property seized by them, which nominally belonged to the barber, is stated to have been worth a lakh of rupees (£10,000).

The barber lost no time, of course, in proceeding to Calcutta, and thence to England, as soon as he was joined by his relatives. The fortune which he carried away with him cannot be accurately estimated; but I have heard it stated that it was not less than twenty-four lakhs of rupees (£240,000). Arrived in England, he speculated largely, and for a time successfully. He was a merchant, a partner in a distillery, a stock-jobber. The railway mania gave the first check to his prosperity. He lost largely by speculations at that time. The distillery was the cause of still further losses; and in 1854 he went through the Insolvent Court. His name is still in the London Directory, however, with 'Esq., merchant,' after it; and he resides in one of the neatest and most fashionable of suburban retreats.<sup>1</sup>

As for Nussir-u-deen Hyder, the refuge and asylum of the world, his sending away of the barber was the signing of his own death-warrant. His family gradually introduced their own servants into the palace; and four months after the favourite's flight (in 1837) the king was poisoned. One of the uncles whom he had treated so badly, a cripple, succeeded him on the throne; and the son of that uncle is the present king.

however, is from one who was in Lucknow at the time, and I have no doubt of its accuracy. [W. K.]

<sup>1</sup> s. Introduction, p. ix. Either Knighton is incorrect, or de Russett returned to India after the date at which this was written, or the man whom Sherer knew as de Russett was not the barber.

## APPENDIX

### PRESENT STATE OF THINGS IN OUDH

Kite-flying—The Nautch-girls—Fair of *Sungum*—Hawking—State of the country—The Nauparah Raneo—Basket-loads of heads—More of the Nauparah Raneo—Fracas in Lucknow—Colonel (now General) Outram's arrival in Lucknow.

It may be supposed by some that the state of things described in the foregoing pages was one which could not last beyond a few years—that a country so governed must speedily come to ruin and utter destruction. The successor of Nussir-u-deen was, I believe, a better man and a more worthy sovereign than he ; but if the Indian newspapers are to be credited, things are pretty much in the same state now as when I was in Lucknow. The same extravagances, the same total neglect of the country, the same depravity on the part of the royal agents, the same luxury and indifference in the palace, are to be found now as then. A few gaudy ceremonies, a few religious festivals annually, with immense displays of elephants, banners, rich liveries and such like, amuse the good people of Lucknow, and tend to keep them in order, if not in content ; whilst the king confines himself to his amusements during the greater part of the year.

The following extracts from the letters of the Lucknow correspondents of the Calcutta press, particularly of the *Englishman* newspaper, will prove the truth of these remarks.

Writing on January 2 of the present year (1855), 'Our Own Correspondent' thus describes the ordinary pastimes of the Oudh nobility :

'Among other recreations, the nawabs, and other affluent natives, as well as the inmates of their harems, are excessively attached to the childish amusement of flying kites, to while away an idle hour. Just a little before dusk, in the cool of the evening, thousands of these kites or *putlungs*,<sup>1</sup> as they are termed here, may be seen floating in the air. Before it is fit for any service, the line, which is sometimes silk, but generally speaking,

<sup>1</sup> *Palang*.

fine cotton, well twisted, thin and durable, is rubbed with boiled rice, mixed with levigated glass, and coloured with indigo or brick dust. This makes the cord so sharp as frequently to cut the fingers, and to prevent this it is necessary to wear gloves. The women in the zenanas, owing I suppose to their sedentary habits and hermit-like existence, display great predilection for this silly sport. Considerable wagers are laid, and at times heavy stakes lost; whoever cuts the cord of his adversary's kite being the winner, and he is immediately overwhelmed with flattery for the dexterity and skill with which he cut adrift his opponent's kite. The general method of passing their time is confined to such frivolous amusements as flying kites, playing on the *sitar*, a favourite instrument with all classes—repetition of amatory poems and extempore compositions in poetry on the fascinations of either their favourite begums or concubines. Should the evening not be devoted to the zenana, dancing-girls are summoned, who keep up to a late hour exhibiting their voluptuous graces. The nautch girls of Lucknow are celebrated for their sociability and education, the generality of them possessing a colloquial knowledge of Persian. They pre-eminently excel the nautch girls of Delhi by their exquisite singing as well as their beauty. The oils, and especially the *utr* (otto of roses), with which they besmear their persons, are anything but agreeable to Europeans.

Again on January 6 the same correspondent writes:

'For the first time, after a continued indisposition of more than three months, which at one time excited apprehensions for his safety, the king<sup>1</sup> drove out last evening, and may now be supposed to be completely recovered. His favourite resort for evening drives is the park of *Dil-kushar*, as being remote from the tumult and din of the city.

'This rural retreat was once a very popular drive with the European residents of Lucknow; but of late it has been shut to the public, the king on account of its seclusion having appropriated it to himself.

'The revenue accruing to the state from licensed punch shops and other houses of ill-fame, is calculated to be enormous. The annual grand fair of *Sungum*<sup>2</sup> attracted

<sup>1</sup> Wajid Ali Shah.

<sup>2</sup> *Sungam*. This mela is held in the month of Māgh (December). At Lucknow it is now only a small local fair. The great Māgh, or Sangam Mela, is held at Allahabad at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna. In ordinary years about 500,000 pilgrims flock to this mela, whilst every twelfth year, at the Kumb Mela, they number from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000.

thousands of the population of this great city. *Sungum* signifies the confluence of waters; a small stream, called the *Kookrail* or the Dog-river, from *kookoor*, a dog, concerning which an extraordinary legend prevails, that the water of the *Kookrail*<sup>1</sup> is an immediate antidote for hydrophobia: this small stream joins the Goomty a little below the king's race-course.

'The festival of *Sungum* is purely a Hindu one, and the Mohammedan holiday-seekers visit the fair to witness the performances of the celebrated jugglers of *Dabeepattun*,<sup>2</sup> whose legerdemain and gymnastic exhibitions are performed with incredible dexterity, and would even make the "Wizard of the North" stare with astonishment. Besides the commonplace deceptions of changing chickens to eggs, and the stone of the mangoe into a growing tree, bearing ripe fruit, performed by itinerant juggl. in every part of India, I saw several surprising feats displayed. One in particular I very much admired as being most perilous, but which absolutely requires to be seen before due appreciation can be accorded: vaulting through a wooden frame, raised upwards of five feet from the ground, and from which are suspended swords, the edges being remarkably sharp; the space between the swords and the lower part of the frame being so small, as in all appearance to preclude the passage of a man's body. With amazing agility, the performer runs along a piece of cloth, elevated two feet from the ground, supported by *tukwars*, and vaults through the small aperture in the frame, doubling himself up into a surprisingly small compass.'

On another occasion, he describes the sport of hawking as practised by the prime minister:

'This week has almost entirely been devoted by the minister to hawking—a species of amusement passionately pursued by the higher class of natives. The plain facing the minister's palace at *Ghow Ghat*,<sup>3</sup> is admirably adapted for this diversion: it forms a beautiful piece of level ground, about three miles in extent, with a few lakes interspersed in opposite directions, plentifully abounding with ducks and other water birds. This pastime affords, even to the spectators, much amusement, who, in breathless suspense,

<sup>1</sup> *Kukrail*. This is a small tributary on the left bank of the *Gumti*. The belief in its efficacy as an antidote to hydrophobia still prevails in Lucknow.

<sup>2</sup> *Debi Patan*, a town in the *Gonda District*.

<sup>3</sup> *Gao Ghat*. On the *Gumti* above *Aish Bagh*. There is a pontoon bridge here.



look on at the terrible struggle between the hawk and its prey. Now the graceful sparrow-hawk, the *accipiter fringillarius* of natural history, sailing majestically in the air, at one time describing circles, and anon remaining stationary, as if immovable in the heavens, till by a signal from its well-known trainer, he pounces down from his airy height with surprising speed, darting at its prey like an arrow winged with unerring precision. The chase then becomes most exciting, the spectators straining their eyes not to lose sight of the struggle; the escape of the pigeon is a circumstance of rare occurrence with trained hawks; the bird soon returns triumphant, its talons encumbered with its victim, and perches, as if aware of its importance, upon the extended arm of the trainer. Nawab Ali Naki possesses some very valuable hawks and falcons, regularly trained, for the field. Whatever his public conduct may be, the private character of Nawab Ali Naki Khan Bahadoor, the premier of Oude, can hardly be censured. He is a man of a prepossessing exterior, and of some education and accomplishments: his demeanour towards Europeans is marked with great politeness and condescension, and in more than one instance he has shown himself desirous of cultivating the friendship of his more enlightened brethren.<sup>1</sup>

And now to turn from the sports and amusements of Lucknow to the condition of the miserable country of which it is the capital. The contrast is striking. I have made no change in the following, except in the substitution of English for the Hindustani words, in which the writer delights. The date is January 16, 1855.

<sup>1</sup> Intelligence has been conveyed from the Nauparah<sup>1</sup> district, that the formidable Ranee of that province has been contending against Orr's<sup>2</sup> corps with extraordinary vigour and success. The Government of Oude claims three years' revenue, which the Ranee on account of the heavy assessments made by the collector, whose oppressions are notorious, has not been able to liquidate. On information being received that a portion of the Ranee's troops<sup>3</sup> lay

<sup>1</sup> Nanparah.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Patrick Orr commanded a regiment in the Oudh army; his brother Captain Alexander Orr was an assistant superintendent of the Oudh frontier police.

<sup>3</sup> The widow of Munour Ali Khan, rajah of Nanparah and mother of the rightful heir Jang Bahadur, had been in rebellion against the Oudh government, since 1853, in defence of her son's right to the succession against a younger Rani who, with the support of

encamped near a neighbouring village, two companies made a *détour* and surprised them : they attempted a slight resistance, but were speedily overcome. Among the prisoners that were taken was found the family of the notorious dacoit, Fuzul Ally,<sup>1</sup> who commands the Rance's forces, if a ragged band of undisciplined Rajpoots can be so dignified—Fuzul Ally himself narrowly escaped being captured.

'I will not again indulge in reporting the misgovernment of this wretched country, the irregularities and worse than supine indolence and apathy of those who disgrace the name of rulers ; but this I say, that millions of the king's unfortunate subjects have drunk too deeply of the bitter cup of humiliation, which is now full, even to overflowing. I will only quote an emphatic clause of the treaty entered into between the king and the British Government. "It is hereby provided that the king of Oude will take into his immediate and earnest consideration, in concert with the British resident, the best means of remedying the existing defects in the police, and in the judicial and revenue administration of his dominions ; and that if his majesty should neglect to attend to the advice and counsel of the British Government or its local representative, and if (which God forbid !) gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule, should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oude dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity, the British Government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portion of the Oude territory, either to a small or a great extent, in which such

Jenab Oulea, the queen mother, was attempting to usurp the gaddi on behalf of an infant nephew of the late rajah. s. Major-General Outram's Report, February 6, 1855, *Oude Papers*.

<sup>1</sup> 'Fuzl Ali, the commander of the old Rani's force, has performed several most desperate deeds of valour during the warfare that is being carried on in that unhappy district' (Outram, l. c.). Fuzl Ali was an escaped convict, one of the men who made an impudent attack upon the minister Aminu-d-daulah in Lucknow (s. Sleeman, *Journey through Oude*, i. 3-10).

To illustrate the devastation caused, 'Nanparah, one of the richest districts in Oude, with magnificent fertile plains, intersected in all directions by rivers and streams, and yielding Munour Khan upwards of three lakhs of rupees yearly, since the Rajah's death is reduced to such a state that it does not now yield the king anything at all, though upwards of 120,000 rupees have been spent every year on the troops stationed there. The wale of the villages are deserted and in ruins.' (Outram's Report, l. c.)

misrule as that above alluded to may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary."<sup>1</sup>

The cool way in which the manufacture of ice is brought in, in the following paragraph, after the statement respecting 'the basket-loads of heads' (of poor wretches executed for real or imaginary offences), will be eminently suggestive to the English reader :

'The basket-loads of heads that are almost monthly brought in and suspended beneath the Abkarree Durwaza (the Custom-house Gate), are melancholy proofs of the sanguinary deeds of violence perpetrated in the districts. The weather having been very cloudy this month, it is apprehended that the supply of ice<sup>2</sup> for the approaching hot season will be extremely scanty.'

Let us proceed, however, with the condition of the more remote districts. We heard something before of the Nauparah Rance and her open defiance of the Government ; the news-writer continues respecting her ; he may not be grammatical, but his meaning is clear :

'The state of affairs in the districts are with rapid strides assuming a grave and menacing aspect. Accounts of hostilities and encounters between the Oude troops and the "Feudal Barons" are daily brought in, and the flame of war is without the least exaggeration kindled in every part of the king's dominions. Since I last wrote to you of the capture of Fazul Ally's family at Nauparah, another serious affray has occurred between Orr's corps and a band of marauders, who had sallied out of the fort on a pillaging expedition. Orr himself headed the attack and made a brilliant *coup de main*, inflicting a loss of sixty killed. The Rance's troops stood their ground and made a determined resistance, keeping up a harassing matchlock fire from the outskirts of a dense jungle of *shakoo*<sup>3</sup> and *dhakit* (thick brushwood), into which they retreat and find a safe asylum from any impending danger. Fazul Ally, I hear, received a wound, which will for some time disable him from doing further mischief. Orr lost twelve men ; and considering the vigorous and animated fight which ensued, his loss was extremely disproportionate. The Rance, together with all her household, has sought refuge in the Nepaulese territory, where she has been securely residing for the last two years. Orr was invested with

<sup>1</sup> Article 7 of a treaty between the H.E.I.C. and Muhammad Ali Shah, Sept. 18, 1837. Aitchison, *Treaties*, &c., ii. 173.

<sup>2</sup> For the method of making and storing ice, see Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 78-81.

<sup>3</sup> *Sakku* or *sāl*, a wood much used for beams, doorposts, &c.

a *khitut* (dress of honour) for his services at Nauparah. But this affair at Nauparah sinks into comparative insignificance before the recent outbreak in the district of Seloun,<sup>1</sup> where the prowess of the king's troops was rather severely tested, and their reputation for *invincible* valour found wanting. Mendee Hossein, the revenue collector of that district, has sent an urgent requisition for a reinforcement of troops, as the corps of irregulars under him have sustained a total repulse. The *casus belli* in this district is the same old story again, the non-payment of revenue. Being in blissful ignorance of the art of war, Mendee Hossein, the Chucklidar, after bombarding the refractory landholder's little mud fort for a couple of successive days, found too long a range for his guns of small calibre to execute any material damage, resolved to force the gate at which he had ineffectually been blazing away so long, as being the least protected. He consequently marched up with his irregulars, determined to extirpate the infidel Rajpoots from the face of the earth; but he had scarcely approached within twenty yards of the gate when a destructive shower of balls put the irregulars, Chucklidar and all, into the greatest disorder, who, panic-struck, made a hasty retreat towards the camp. They were pursued and speedily overtaken by the besieged Rajpoots, who killed or wounded upwards of ninety irregulars—a disaster which might have been avoided, but for their disgraceful and pusillanimous flight. The minister has ordered the Chucklidar to be reinforced by twelve guns, and a regiment of 800 strong, under the command of Fedu Hossein, a native commandant of irregulars.<sup>2</sup> What I have detailed above may be

<sup>1</sup> Salone.

<sup>2</sup> 'In another quarter, the Salone Elaka, even more sanguinary contests are taking place between the Oude troops, and powerful Talookdars, who are said to have been driven to resistance in consequence of the endeavour of the Amil to exact more from them this year than had ever been demanded for twenty years previously. One of these Talookdars, Sheadurshun Singh, of Chundrapoor, on demurring to accede to the demand, was besieged in his smaller fort of Chopka, which was invested by the Amil at the head of 2,000 men on the 1st of January, on which day four of the Talookdar's followers, who fell into the Nazim's hands, were decapitated. Next day the fort was stormed and taken, with great loss on both sides, seventy of the Talookdar's men and fifty of the assailants being reported killed. Reinforcements were then despatched to enable the Amil to reduce the larger fort of Chundrapoor, which held out until the 20th of January, when Sheadurshun Singh evacuated the place at night with all his

depended on as strictly true; my source of information I believe to be unquestionable. *Nothing else* worthy of record stirring. The natives complain of the severity of the cold season; this has been an unusually severe winter.'

I have mentioned that affrays were by no means uncommon even in the streets of Lucknow, and that Nussir and his mother were once at open war with each other. In the following paragraph, the newswriter describes what he pleasantly calls a *fracas* between the retainers of two public officers, both servants of the king—a *fracas*, in which five people lost their lives; of the number wounded he says nothing. Such a *fracas* in a European capital would cause some excitement—in Lucknow it forms a pleasant episode in the newswriters' weekly dispatch. The date is January 29 of the present year:

'The general topic of conversation (I mean amongst the natives) is regarding a serious affray, attended with melancholy results. But I must enter more into detail. Yesterday, in the afternoon, the armed retainers of Bussant Ally, a eunuch, who has recently emerged from the unenviable obscurity of a slave, to some influence, and a party of irregular infantry belonging to the *Coomastan*<sup>1</sup> Abid Ally, fought in one of the public thoroughfares of the city. This *fracas*, which has caused considerable excitement, originated under circumstances extremely trivial. The eunuch it appears had purchased a tamarind-tree, the property of a washerman residing in the immediate vicinity of Abid Ally. Wishing to convert this umbrageous tree into fuel for his own domestic purposes, the eunuch ordered it to be cut down. The tree was situated contiguous to the walls of Abid Ally's house, and afforded its inmates shelter from the scorching rays of the summer's sun; and Abid Ally's *nujeebs*,<sup>2</sup> therefore, not only considered it uncharitable, but oppressive, to be deprived of the friendly tamarind-tree. The servants prepared to execute their master's mission, and commenced hewing it down, but were unexpectedly compelled to cease by the retainers abruptly commanding them, in somewhat a less polite tone than "Woodman, spare that tree", to desist. An altercation ensued, which resulted in the determination

followers. The fort was then destroyed, and the Talookdar is now a fugitive in open rebellion, at the head of a desperate band, reduced to the necessity of living by rapine and plunder.'—*Outram (Report, l. c.)*.

<sup>1</sup> Probably a misprint for *coomedan*, *kumcdan*—a corruption of commandant.

<sup>2</sup> *Nujeebs*. Irregular troops.

of Abid Ally's troops to protect it from the fury of the axe. This was followed by high words and a counter resolve to cut it down—high words were succeeded by blows. In Lucknow, swords are considered an indispensable appendage to the dress, and consequently universally worn—these were soon unsheathed, and a general contest commenced, which was hotly kept up for half an hour, by which time the police interfered and suppressed the tumult, not however before five persons paid the penalty of their indiscretion by being killed. The mob I am told surrounded the combatants by thousands, and with the greatest *nonchalance* looked on at the deadly strife.'

The foregoing is bad enough, but the following, of the date of August 11, is infinitely worse :

'Oude has been the scene of a dreadful tragedy. At a place named Awad,<sup>1</sup> about six miles from Fyzabad, there has been a fight between the Mussulmans and the Hindus, arising out of some religious disputes. The former, who appear to have been both the aggressors and the assailants, were cut up almost to a man, but not before they had placed some ninety Hindus *hors de combat*. The sooner General Outram's report upon the state of Oude, upon which Lord Dalhousie is now employed, goes home, together with his lordship's minute, the better, for every day that the annexation of this misgoverned country is delayed, another day of suffering is added to the lot of hundreds, nay thousands, of one of the finest races of Hindostan.'

We understand that the 31st N.I. will not, as has been stated by some of our contemporaries, be relieved by the 19th N.I. from Lucknow, because the resident has objected to any reduction of the force at Lucknow. It is not at all improbable that he will be making a requisition for troops, as the quarrel between the Mussulmans and Hindus at Fyzabad is said to be assuming a most threatening aspect. Thousands are reported to have assembled for a stand-up fight, and if only a tenth of the number mentioned to us has been collected, the garrison of Lucknow and the king's forces combined would hardly suffice to put a stop to the fighting. A religious war between the fanatic Mussulmans and the bold Rajpoots of Oude would be a most fierce and bloody contest, and there is no guessing to what evil consequences it might not lead.'

*The Times* Bombay correspondent asserts, that in this aggression the king upholds the Mussulmans, and is deaf to the remonstrances of the resident, no less than of his own prime minister.

<sup>1</sup> Ajodhya or Awadh.

Lastly—to discover the parade and display still indulged in by this mimicry of a government—let us turn to the account of the reception of the new resident, Colonel (now General) Outram, by the authorities at Lucknow, in December last :

‘On the morning of the 2nd December, Colonel Outram, C.B., arrived at Cawnpore, and there he remained until the 4th. Soon after his arrival, he was waited upon by the high officers of state and confidential servants of the court of Lucknow, who were specially charged with the care of his majesty’s kitchen, and all the supplies sufficient to prepare a magnificent repast for the resident. This compliment has been invariably paid by the kings of Oude to the representatives of the Company. On this occasion the provision was of the most sumptuous and costly character. This mission was confided to one of his majesty’s principal physicians Zubdool-ool-Hookma Syud Mirza Bahadoor, the Benjamin Brodie of Lucknow.

‘On the 4th, Colonel Outram left Cawnpore ; and on crossing the Ganges, found one of the king’s state carriages, with four horses, waiting for him. The carriage was a mass of gilding and velvet, profusely emblazoned with gold lace. As Colonel Outram took his seat, a salute fired from his majesty’s artillery announced that the gallant soldier and accomplished statesman had entered the kingdom of Oude. Salutes were fired at intervals of ten miles, in order that all might know how far the resident had progressed.’

The value of noise in the maintenance of dignity is evidently understood at Lucknow. Our court chronicler proceeds in his grandiose vein :

‘Colonel Outram was accompanied by Mr. Power, of the civil service, assistant to the magistrate at Cawnpore ; and by Dr. Tressider, the civil surgeon. Eighteen miles from Lucknow, at a place called Bunnee, Colonel Outram was met by Captain Hayes, officiating resident, with whom were also Captain Beatson and Dr. Fayer,<sup>1</sup> of the Lucknow Residency. Captain Hayes then took his place beside Colonel Outram ; they were followed by Mr. Power, Captain Beatson, &c., &c.

‘The carriages were escorted by a detachment of irregular cavalry. The road was lined all the way to Lucknow by crowds anxious to catch a sight of the man to whom the destinies of Oude had been committed. On approaching the Char Bagh, a salute was fired by his majesty’s artillery, announcing that the resident had nearly

<sup>1</sup> A misprint for Fayer.

completed his journey. On these occasions it is the etiquette that the resident should not enter the city, but be driven as a guest to some one or other of the garden palaces belonging to the king. The Dhil-kushar Palace had been selected for his reception on this occasion. It is situated about two miles from the city, in the centre of an extensive park of magnificent timber, and is well stocked with deer. The palace was built by Saadut Ali Khan, and contains some fine rooms, elegantly designed, but miserably furnished. There are, however, in it some portraits and pictures worth looking at; one, a full-length figure of Ghazi-u-deen Padshah (who died in 1827) in his robes of state, resting upon a sword, and surrounded by his courtiers; another represents Mohammed Ali Shah, the successor of Nussir-u-deen: he is represented seated on his throne, and encumbered by a profusion of jewellery and drapery; but as the painting is by a native of India, it were needless to criticise it too minutely. One of the bedrooms contains a picture of the once celebrated Mr. Paul, who wished to impeach the Marquis of Wellesley. He has a peculiarly sad, hang-dog look about him.' Such is the court news-writer's opinion; how could he have any other, seeing that he wanted to impeach a marquis?

'In the dining-room there are two superb pictures, by Zoffani, of voluptuous-looking young women, displaying charms to which none but Moore or Anacreon could do justice. They are half-lengths, as large as life, looking more like life than most pictures, having the touch of Titian and the flesh of Etty.'

Having thus exhibited his artistic taste, and critical acumen in the picture line, our chronicler proceeds:

'On the colonel's arrival at Dhil-kushar, a royal salute from his majesty's horse-artillery proclaimed to all Lucknow that he had arrived; and there, surrounded by his staff and by the gentlemen who had accompanied him, with the wine of Bordeaux and the balmy incense of Number Twos, we will leave him to "rosy dreams and slumber light", recruiting for the fatigues and honours of the morrow.' The 'number twos' might be unintelligible to the English reader: I just step in here to inform him that it means No. 2 *Manilla cheroots*, the favourite cigars of the East.

On December 5, the installation of the gallant general as resident is thus described: 'Long before sunrise, thousands upon thousands of the citizens of Lucknow were crowding the roads to the Dhil-kushar Palace, and clambering on the roof of every building whence a glimpse



of the procession could be obtained. A guard of honour, consisting of the flank companies of the 19th, 34th, and the 2nd Oude regiments, with the regimental colours, were drawn up at an early hour in the park to do honours to Colonel Outram, and to salute the heir-apparent. The troops had their proper complement of European officers, and were under the command of Major Troup, being accompanied by the splendid band of the 19th regiment. To the great grief of all his majesty's subjects, the king was unfortunately too ill to appear in person to welcome the gallant soldier. After a considerable delay, a royal salute announced that the heir-apparent, attended by the prime minister, and by all the principal noblemen and gentlemen of the court, had left the king's palace to meet Captain Hayes, the officiating resident. The delay originated in this way: according to ancient custom on these occasions, it has always been the rule for the king or the heir-apparent to meet the officiating or the assistant resident at a certain spot, not very far beyond the Bayley Guard, which is stationed at one of the residency gates. On this occasion an attempt was made to induce Captain Hayes to advance at least a mile beyond the prescribed spot; and several native gentlemen galloped up, with the blindest of messages and kindest of compliments, begging Captain Hayes to move on and meet the heir-apparent. To all this Captain Hayes mildly replied, that he had no objection to remain out all day, but that not a foot would he advance beyond what he ought to do.' A weighty matter, truly, on which our court newsmen dilates at some length. It was settled, however, by time, as all questions must ultimately be, whether they involve the military preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, or the advance of Captain Hayes nearly a mile—no, not *nearly* a mile—at least a mile further than 'ancient' custom prescribed!

'Presently the magnificent *cortège* of the heir-apparent was seen advancing to meet the gallant captain. The parties advanced, shook hands, discoursed of the weather, &c., and then the united procession reformed, and moved on towards Dhil-kushar.

'Let the reader imagine a procession of more than three hundred elephants and camels, caparisoned and decorated with all that "barbaric pomp" could lavish, and Asiatic splendour shower down; with all the princes and nobles of the kingdom blazing with jewels, sparkling with gems, gorgeous in apparel, with footmen and horsemen in splendid liveries, swarming on all sides; pennons and banners dancing in the sun's rays, and a perfect forest

of gold and silver sticks, spears, and other insignia of imperial and royal state.

Slowly and stately the procession wound its way until it entered the royal park of Dhil-kushar. The heir-apparent was supported on the right by Captain Hayes, and on the left by Brigadier Hoggan. As the procession approached the centre of the park, Colonel Outram's carriage moved forward to meet the heir-apparent. At the spot previously determined on, the two processions met, and nothing could exceed the beauty and splendour of the *coup-d'œil* at this moment. As Colonel Outram and the heir-apparent met and shook hands, the guard of honour under Major Troup presented arms, the horse-artillery of his majesty thundered forth a royal salute, and, amidst the solemn strains of the National Anthem, the clang of trumpets, and the rattle of drums from his majesty's cavalry and infantry, Colonel Outram took his seat in the *howdah* of the heir-apparent, and at his highness's right hand. The gorgeous procession then retraced its steps, at a slow stately pace, towards the city. Here follows a description of the colonel's 'dark hair and moustaches', his 'falcon eyes', his 'diplomatic costume' (whatever that may mean), his 'decorations', &c., &c.

As the procession left the Dhil-kushar and entered the city, nothing appeared but a sea of heads towering one above the other, from the street to the verandahs, from the verandahs to the roofs, all dressed out in gala costume, and all enjoying the splendid scene. According to a good old rule, the heir-apparent presented the colonel with a bag containing 1,200 rupees (equal to £120 sterling), for distribution amongst the crowds of beggars and *vauriens* who vociferously shouted, with stentorian lungs, for *bukhsheesh*, *bukhsheesh* (largesse, largesse). The gallant officer handed over the coins to Captain Hayes, who was on his right, and who rained down silver as the procession moved onwards. The scramble which ensued led to a series of stand-up fights, right and left, and to a rushing fire of entreaties, prayers, and whines from the beggars, combined with no end of swearing from the grain-sellers and cloth-merchants, into whose huts the coins fell by accident, all of which were stormed forthwith, just as the Highlanders did the heights of Alma; whilst one vigorous effort to reach the summit of a thatched roof terminated in its rapid disappearance, to the grief of the inhabitants—three goats, a couple of old women, and a pugnacious jackass, which luckless animal resented the intrusion from above by hearty kicks and soon cleared a circle round him. The

procession, on reaching the king's present residence, turned off towards the right, and wended its way through an extensive garden by an excellent road with lamp-posts on either side, which leads to the Shah Mungul,<sup>1</sup> an elegant and spacious palace, by the margin of the Goomty's blue waters. The Shah Mungul is situated in a lovely garden, where the citron, the lemon, and the orange, mingle with the rose and pomegranate in endless profusion. Fountains and statues enliven and adorn the garden; and gold and silver fish flash like molten gold and liquid silver in pools of the clearest water. At this palace a sumptuous repast was prepared,<sup>2</sup> &c., &c.

There is no need to follow our pleasant news-writer to the repast. I have quoted sufficient to prove that the people of Lucknow are still amused with processions and military parade, whilst the provinces of Oudh are left a prey to anarchy and confusion.

I have purposely drawn these illustrations from the events of the last few months, in order that it may not be objected that things are altogether different now in Oudh from what they were twenty years ago. In many parts of India there has unquestionably been a marked improvement within that period; but such is not the case in Oudh. There, everything remains as it was; no worse, perhaps—for it could not be much worse—but certainly not better.

Of the interior of the palace the news writers of the Indian papers probably know nothing; but could we lift the veil from the palace of to-day, as I have partially lifted it in the foregoing chapters from the palace of twenty years ago, I have no doubt we should find therein the same vices and the same frivolities—the same mixture of narrow-minded caprice, unbridled license, fitful generosity, and unmitigated selfishness.

<sup>1</sup> Shah Manzil. This palace, which was built by Ghaziu-d-din Haider, forms part, with the Mubarak Manzil, of the buildings now generally known as the Moti Mahal.

# ELIHU JAN'S STORY

OR

## THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN EASTERN QUEEN

BY

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, LL.D.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER IN OUDH:

AUTHOR OF 'PRIVATE LIFE OF AN EASTERN KING,' 'VILLAGE LIFE IN OUDH,'  
ETC.

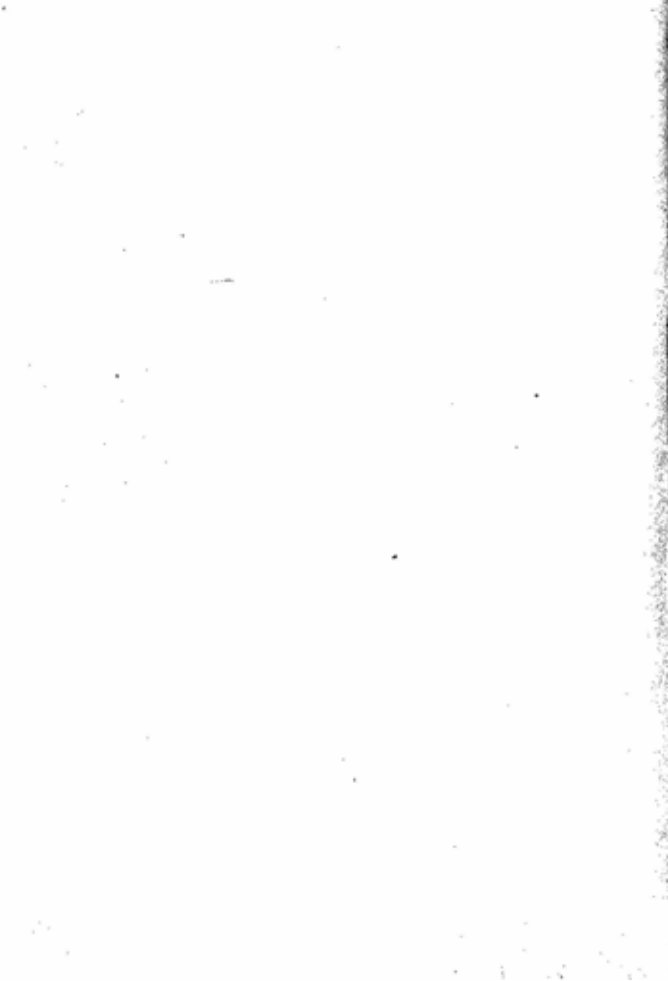


## PREFACE

ELIHU JAN is not a fictitious character. She was brought up in the Court of Lucknow from her seventh year, as related in the first chapter of the following work. She was for many years hookah attendant to the queen of Oudh, and of course thus became acquainted with much that happened in the palace. After the mutiny, she was first an ayah in the household of Mr. Johannes, the wealthy merchant of Lucknow, and subsequently entered my wife's service in the same capacity. She has been with us now nearly three years, is still in our service, and, so far as I have been able to verify her accounts of the queen's private life, I have found them to be true. I therefore believe the truth of the whole, and I have narrated it as much as possible in her own words, and with her own reflections—allowances being made for the translation from Urdu into English.

HIMALAYA CLUB, MUSSOORIE :

*June 1864.*



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# ELIHU JAN'S STORY

## CHAPTER I

### PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

THE earliest thing I can remember is that my father, Ashabad Khan, lived with his two brothers in our village, long, long ago, some fifteen or sixteen miles from Lucknow. The cottage was divided into three tenements, each of which had its separate door, and was shut off from the rest by its own partition wall. The lands the three brothers cultivated were Crown lands,<sup>1</sup> belonging to the king at Lucknow, and it was not without difficulty that the rent was paid. It was not the rent alone that made the difficulty, but the exactions of the various king's servants, who claimed sums as their rights over and above the rent, which my father and uncles were afraid to refuse them. My mother had died at my birth, and my only female companion was a cousin, the daughter of a younger brother of my father, who was five or six years older than I, and who took care of me.

At length, what with exactions, and what with bad crops, things went from bad to worse, and one year the Sepoys came down upon us to force my father and uncles to pay the rents due, for they were much in arrears. My father and uncles ran away, and I and my cousin were taken off as slaves to the palace in Lucknow. I was about seven years of age, and I am an old woman now of near thirty; but I cannot tell exactly how old I am, or how old I was. This I know, that my father was a good Soanny<sup>2</sup> Mussulman, and that at the court they brought me up as a Sheesah; but I have always been an

<sup>1</sup> i. e. *Khalas*; such lands were exempt from the control of the *Chakladar*.

<sup>2</sup> The Soonnies are the Protestants, the Sheeahs the Roman Catholics of Moslemism. [W. K.]

unhappy creature—unhappy and miserable—since the time when I killed my mother at my birth. What luck or good fortune can the child expect that kills its mother ?

Arrived at the palace, we were washed and dressed, and taken into the queen's apartments. I was speechless with astonishment at the grandeur of the rooms. The ceiling was beautifully painted, the walls were richly ornamented with large mirrors and gilt edgings. Chandeliers hung from the roof, and the floor was covered with a large carpet, and in the centre of the carpet was a white cloth. Upon the upper end of this white cloth was a smaller and richer carpet, with cushions, and a large pillow for the back gorgeously trimmed with thick gold fringe. The cushions were covered with crimson velvet, with flowers of gold thread worked on them. With her back leaning against the large round pillow sat the queen<sup>1</sup> smoking her hookah. She was dressed in light-coloured clothes, all of one colour. She preferred light blue, lavender, or straw-coloured garments, with rich embroidery, and she wore much jewellery, nose-rings, ear-rings, bracelets, anklets, and such-like, all adorned profusely with precious stones. The queen was considered by us natives as very handsome ; whether Europeans would think so or not, I do not know, for your ways and thoughts are not as ours. She was of the middle height, and at that time light and cheerful ; not gloomy and sorrowful, as she was afterwards, when the kingdom was taken away from her son, and when she went to London<sup>2</sup> to see the English queen, and ask for her son's kingdom back again. She had many sorrows after that time. I speak of the time when her husband was alive and on the throne, and when she was young and happy. Her complexion, when I first saw her, was a clear yellow. She was thin and finely formed ; her eyes large, black, and lustrous ; her hair of a dark-brown, not black ; her features prominent ; and her

<sup>1</sup> Malika Kishwar Bahadur Fakr-ul-Zamani, Nawab Taj Ara Begam, the wife of Amjad Ali Shah, was daughter of Hâsinu-d-din Khan of Kalpi. She is generally referred to as Jonab Aulea Begam by English writers.

<sup>2</sup> c. Introduction, p. xl.

hands and feet small and delicate. She grew fat, and lost her delicate fragile beauty long before she went to England. But I am speaking of long, long ago.

When we were first brought into the queen's presence, my cousin and I, the queen spoke kindly to us, and sent for sweetmeats. But I could not eat, I was too busy gazing around ; all was new and beautiful to me ; I thought, surely this is Peristan (the country of the Peris), and these are surely Peris, not mortals. But I was told to eat, and I did so, and found the sweetmeats so delicious, that I soon forgot everything else. We were asked whether we were Shceahs or Soonnies, and the queen was sorry to hear that we were Soonnies. To me, ignorant as I was, the difference was a small matter ; but my cousin was better instructed, and told me afterwards I must always continue to be a Soonny in heart, whatever they taught me. I was well fed, and my duties were light, so that I did not dislike living in the palace ; but it was not so with my cousin—she was refractory, and was often punished.

A year passed away. I cannot remember much of that far-off time. Good living and light work made me fat and well-looking. My father and his brothers had got money enough to pay their debts, and came to Lucknow to pay the money, and to reclaim my cousin and myself. My cousin was quite willing to go, but I was not so willing. When I was taken to see my father, who was waiting at the palace, I told him I did not want to go home. He was sorrowful, and lamented. I could not bear to see him so sad, and I said, ' Well, if I go home you must give me *khoormas*,<sup>1</sup> *pillaus*,<sup>2</sup> and curries, such as I get here to eat ; not *khodo*,<sup>3</sup> and *dhal*,<sup>4</sup> as I got at home before.' When the queen heard that I was not willing to go home she sent for me again and spoke kindly to me : her heart was good. She sent word to my father that I should be brought up at the palace and taught to prepare her *hookah*,

<sup>1</sup> *Qôrmâ*, cooked meat ; or possibly *Kâurmâ*, date, also sweetmeat

<sup>2</sup> *Pillau*, meat boiled with rice and spices.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaddû* or *kaddû*, pumpkin.

<sup>4</sup> *Dal*, split peas, pulse.

and that he might come occasionally to see me. But my father was not content, and one day when the king, Umjîd Aly Shah, was going through the streets of Lucknow in his *janpan* or chair, my father threw himself on the ground before him, and begged for justice and mercy. The king asked what was the matter, and my father said he would die if his daughter were not restored to him, for she was his only child. The king promised to exert himself in the matter, and spoke to the queen. At first the queen refused, but afterwards consented, on condition that if, after some time, I still wished to return, I was to be allowed to do so. So I was taken home by my father and lived at home for several months—I cannot tell exactly how many months—but it was less than a year; some six or eight months perhaps.

I was not so happy at home as I had been in the palace. My father was seldom with me, and my cousin was not kind, and the neighbours knew that I had killed my mother at my birth, miserable that I am, and so I longed to return. At length one day two *Chuprassies*<sup>1</sup> came from Lucknow, and said the queen wanted to see me, and I was brought back to the court. She asked me if I wished to remain at home, or would prefer being her slave. I spoke as a child; I preferred the palace to our poor cottage, and I was not allowed to return to my father; nor did he come to reclaim me, wretched that I am: he loved me no longer.

Another year passed away, and the queen was kind, and a *Moollah*<sup>2</sup> was appointed to teach us the Koran. We learned something of it, but we often bribed the *Moollah* to let us play in the courtyard where the fountains were, instead of being taught. There were six or eight of us, all about the same age—nine or ten years of age—some good, some bad, some pretty, some ugly, as the way of the world and of mankind is. We bribed the *Moollah* with money, or ornaments, or sweetmeats, or whatever we had. He was an old white-bearded man, we were slaves; what did he care whether we learned or not? But all we learned was *Sheeah* doctrine and *Sheeah* customs,

<sup>1</sup> *Chapraîsi*, messenger (from *chapra*, a metal badge).

<sup>2</sup> *Mulla* (Pers.) = *Maulavi*, doctor of law.

and to this day I know no other. I was always a castaway. At length it was told the queen that we were not learning but playing, and she sent for us one day to hear what we could read and repeat, and we knew little or nothing. So the queen was angry, and sent to the Moollah to say her slaves were not learning, and next day the Moollah beat us all with a cane, and in the evening we went to the queen and begged mercy and justice, and showed her the marks of the cane, and she said, 'Wah ! wah ! what trouble it is—it is not their fate to learn—let the Moollah be dismissed.' She was a kind queen and a good always.

It was shortly after the dismissal of the Moollah that news was brought of my father being on his death-bed, and the queen ordered me to be taken to see him. I suppose I was about ten years of age, but how can I tell exactly ? Is it that all my life is written down in a book, that I should be able to tell exactly how old I was when each thing happened ?

I found my father lying on his bed with closed eyes. I thought he was dead at first. But after a little, he opened his eyes and saw me and knew me. Many were there ; my cousin and others attending on him. He feebly lifted his arms to embrace me. I laid my head beside his head, and wept. Miserable that I was and am, I knew then that I had no mother, and my father was going, and I was to be a slave—an outcast from my family and my religion—alone in the world, and unhappy always. But who shall avoid their fate ? God gives to one happiness and to another misery, and who shall question it ? I thought my father was trying to speak to me : perhaps he was, but he was weak, and his head turned from mine on the pillow, and they said ' He will sleep ; ' so I arose, and took off my muslin head-dress, and covered his face with it, and sat near the door watching. Three or four hours passed away. My cousin and the others had gone ; I was alone with my sleeping father, and I was very wretched, but my heart was too full for tears ; I could not cry. I was afraid and sad. At length they came inquiring one by one. I said ' He sleeps,' but they lifted the covering from his face, and said ' He is dead.'

I now knew what it was to be alone indeed. Born wretched, I have lived wretched. Such has been my fate. I was too stupefied for tears, and my former companions and playmates crowded round me, and watched me, and said, 'She does not cry; do not the Sheeahs weep for dead fathers?' I was treated as an outcast; I deserved to be so treated. I was not fit to eat with my relatives, all good Soonnies; I was not allowed to sit on the same mat with them. I could not use the same vessels for cooking. I was a Sheeah, and I was glad to get back again to court, where all were Sheeahs, and where the queen was kind. I learned to rub the queen's feet, and to prepare her hookah, and I was as happy as so miserable and forlorn a creature as I can ever expect to be.

But I was married? Yes, of course I was married. But God denied me children. What right had I to expect children, who had killed my mother at my birth? My marriage was thus. When I was fit to be married, the queen told me it was time, and I was nothing loath. The news was told that one of the queen's slave girls was to be married, and many men came forward to offer. But the queen would have no Soonnies. At length a Sheeah, the son of a Sheeah, offered—Gholam Hussain by name. He was told to come into the courtyard one day at noon, and I saw him there. He did not see me. I was with other girls, and one of them, whom I had offended a few days before, caught hold of my arm, and said to another girl, 'That is to be Elihu Jan's husband. Behold, she carries her head high and is proud, and God has sent her a husband as black as an Abyssinian.' I had no choice in the matter; all was arranged for me. Gholam Hussain got a shop for selling tobacco and such-like, near the palace gates, and I was married to him. I did not like him at first, and spent as much time as I could away from him, in attendance on the queen. But he was kind to me, and I liked him better at last; and although he is black, he is not a bad man. But I was fated to misery.

After the queen's husband, Umjid Aly Shah,<sup>1</sup> had died, and his son Wajid Aly Shah had reigned many years, then the

<sup>1</sup> Amjad Ali Shah died February 13, 1847.

English came and took the kingdom, and the queen, my mistress, mother of the king, said, 'I will go to England. The Queen of England is also a mother. I will ask her to give me back my kingdom.' Alas! what wailing, what sorrow, what beating of breasts, then took place amongst us! 'How shall you cross the great black seas?' said we, 'you, who fear even the river?' But it was fate, and she said she would go, and she went. I went with her to Calcutta, and my husband was with us. The king offered to support us in Calcutta, for the queen, his mother, charged him to be kind to all her attendants. But I would not live in *his* palace; I would prefer begging my bread abroad in the world. I returned to Lucknow with my husband. We lived on my jewels and ornaments for some time. My husband's shop was cleared away. All the bazaar was cleared away. The English like grass better than bazaars. God has given them the kingdom. God's will be done. But when the gold and silver ornaments, and my few jewels, were all eaten up, then I became a servant. The English ladies are kind and good, and they believe in God, and I love my mistress, that is, ever since the queen died in Europe. And my husband? Oh! He is as black as ever, a good kind man, and he sits at home and eats opium, and smokes the hookah. My wages are enough for both of us.



## CHAPTER II

### THE QUEEN'S DAILY LIFE

DURING the life of her husband, Umjid Aly Shah, the queen was very happy. She had been his only wife for many years, and the first serious quarrel between them was when he took a second wife. At first the queen knew nothing of it, but, when she came to hear of it, she refused to see the king for three days, and abstained from eating, and was silent, until the vizier and officers of state represented to her that serious injury would result to the kingdom if she persevered in so doing. Still, she was always the chief queen. She was the mother of the heir-apparent, the present ex-King of Oudh, Wajid Aly Shah, and after Umjid Aly Shah's death, the honours paid to her as queen-dowager, and as mother of the king, were similar to those she received during her husband's lifetime.

The queen and Umjid Aly Shah were fond of each other, and she led a virtuous, religious life always, whatever might be going on in the palace or city, or however her husband or son might act. But men are always great evil-doers, and when women have power, and are able to live as they choose, all is moral and regular. It is the power and influence of men that cause the evil. One wife, four wives, fifty wives will not suffice a king, whilst a queen is content with one husband, if he will but be faithful. But when was a man ever faithful?

I was only a child when Umjid Aly Shah was king, and I did not see so much of the queen then; as I did afterwards during the reign of her son, Wajid Aly. Can I remember in those far-off days what she said or what she did? I was a child, and it is long long ago; but this I know, that she was always kind and good.

She was fond of the Chutter Munzil<sup>1</sup> and the Chowlukhy

<sup>1</sup> The Chatter Mantil, so called from the gilded umbrella (چادر) which crowns it, was built as zenana quarters adjoining the Farhat

Palaces<sup>1</sup> in Lucknow, and of Dwarka Dhass' garden-house<sup>2</sup> in the country. These were her three favourite residences. During the cold weather she usually resided in the Chutter Munzil, and it was a common thing for her to sit at one of the windows, looking out through the venetians at the river and the road, watching whatever was passing there; and often did she send for some poor crying woman, and send her away with comfort in her heart and money in her hand. The Chow-lukhy she preferred in the hot season, and the garden-house in the rains. I remember once I was waiting on her during the rains, when she had come in for a few days to the Chutter Munzil, and she was looking out on the swollen river whilst I was attending to her hookah. She called out to me, 'Elihu Jan, there is an old woman being carried down the river! Run, call the attendants—get assistance—have her saved!' I ran and called out for help. The poor old woman's cottage had been swept away by the flood, and she was holding on to part of the thatched roof as it was being carried along. She was soon released by the help of the attendants dispatched for the purpose, and having been dried and clothed, she was brought into the queen's apartment. After learning her history, and that the poor old woman was alone in the world, all her relatives dead, none to help or comfort or support her, the queen settled a pension of three rupees a month on her. She used to go about Lucknow afterwards, always called the 'floating old woman' by the crowd, and I saw her so going about shortly before the English took the country. What became of her then, how can I tell? When the world was turned upside down, and kings and queens lost their thrones, what matter what became of one poor old woman?

Baksh Palace. It was begun by Ghaziu-d-din Haider and completed by his successor. The building is now occupied by the United Service Club.

<sup>1</sup> Chaulakhi. This palace stood at the south-east corner of the Kaisar Bagh; little of it now remains. It was built by Azimu-l-lah Khan, barber to Wajid Ali Shah, and derives its name from the fact that the king purchased it for four lakhs.

<sup>2</sup> Dwarka Das' garden house was situated to the south of Char Bagh—somewhere near the present brigade parade ground. No trace of it remains, I believe.

To the garden-house there was a large garden attached, with high walls all round ; and during the rainy season, when it was pleasantly cool between the showers, the queen, with her attendant women, a hundred of them, or two hundred of them, would roam round the walks, enjoying herself like a child. With a good heart and a propitious fate one may be very happy anywhere, but particularly in a garden, for the flowers and trees remind one of Paradise.

The queen was very religious. After rising about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, she usually had her hands and face washed by her attendants, tasted a little unleavened cake with a preparation of milk, and then went to her dressing-room, where the Moollah always attended to read the Koran—the Moollah being separated from her by a screen. After her husband's death she used to read the Koran herself far into the night, for she was a great scholar, and her words were wise. A cooling drink was brought to her in hot weather before the mid-day meal, and this drink was of conserves and diluted pearls. All kings and queens, I have heard, drink diluted pearls, and it is said, moreover, that they are a very wholesome thing, and of great virtue ; but of course none but kings and queens could afford to drink them. I had nothing to do with the queen's drinks or meats, only her hookah, and I rubbed her feet too ; but I have no doubt she drank the pearls—everybody said she did.

After dressing and sitting in state, the mid-day meal or breakfast was introduced. The queen's breakfast was cooked by women in her own kitchens, the king's by men in other kitchens. But often, with band playing, the king came to eat with the queen, and his breakfast was brought over on silver trays. A cannon was fired at noon, and that was the signal for breakfast. The second meal, or dinner, was at or after sunset, and consisted of the same viands, pillaus of three kinds, khoormas, kabobs,<sup>1</sup> strong broths of meat or sheep's head, with all kinds of vegetables, and sweetmeats. Can I remember all she ate, when twenty to thirty dishes were introduced at each meal ? She always ate with a spoon, not

<sup>1</sup> *Kabab*, small pieces of roasted meat.

with her hands as we do. The hookah was introduced after each meal, and, if people came for an audience after that, it was well for them if the king's or the queen's hookah was properly prepared. The best of people are cross if their food or their hookah is bad, but particularly if the hookah is not properly prepared.

On retiring to rest the queen always had a story-teller, to narrate something to her. When the king was alive, the story-teller used to sit behind a screen, not far from the bed, but when she became a widow, the story-teller sat at the bed's head, and varied her story according to the queen's taste. If the object was to induce sleep, a drowsy, monotonous, rignamole story, drawlingly told, soon produced the desired effect. If the object was to amuse, to excite, to enliven, to soothe sorrow, the story-teller varied her tale accordingly. Far into the night the tale was told, and a handsome present was the reward of a really good story. There were four favourite story-tellers. The attendants were changed as the story-teller was introduced, and as she left they were changed again. The queen was fond of stories, and often told some to us, but chiefly religious stories. The tales told by the story-tellers were of all kinds : about kings and queens, about love—about beggars becoming princes, or princes beggars—about the *Peris* and the Court of *Indra*. There are plenty of story-tellers left in Lucknow, if you want to know what kind of tales they told.

When the queen bathed, then was there much preparation, and a long and tiresome day's work for her servants. I was not one of the bath attendants, but I know all about it. Cisterns of cold water were filled in the haram, and pipes of warm water ; all were got ready betimes, and on the day for bathing both the queen and her attendants prepared for a hard day's work. Soap was not used in the queen's bath, but *basan* (ground pease)<sup>1</sup> instead. Two or three of the oldest attendants, who had been with the queen from her maidenhood, attended, undressed, and bathed her. *Basan* was plentifully rubbed over each limb, and washed off with

<sup>1</sup> *Basan*, pea flour, ground grain.

warm water, rubbed on and washed off, over and over again, perhaps twenty times—a tedious process. The queen and her attendants were all equally tired before the bath was over, and by that time the usual meal was ready. There were eunuchs of course, in the palace—what palace is without them?—but the queen did not like them, and they only appeared on occasions of public ceremony, processions, and such-like. They had nothing to do with the bath. There were women-soldiers also, on guard in uniform and with musket, bayonet, &c., at the entrances of the female apartments of the palace, and in the corridors. The queen did not like them, and interfered little with them. The old customs were maintained, but with as little parade as possible. In fact, so averse was the queen to parade and fuss, that she seldom went abroad, except when it was absolutely necessary. The collection of elephants, camels, and horses, cavalry and foot-soldiers, silver-stick bearers, and guards of all kinds, was a bore to her. She liked elegant dresses and neat jewellery, but she was wearied with state apparel, and often, on returning from expeditions of ceremony, would throw herself down tired on the couch, exclaiming, ‘Let them all go away : *bismillah* ! but I am glad it is all over, it is very tiresome.’ After her husband’s death she never wore the nose-ring again, but retained all her other jewels and state apparel. A band preceded her, and guards and troops attended when she was queen-dowager, just as when she was queen-regnant ; for was she not the king’s mother ?

For exercise and amusement the grounds, enclosed by high walls, near the palaces and at the country seats of the king, were sufficient. There were artificial fountains, and sheets of water, and flowers and fruit-trees, and well-kept walks ; ample space for walking or riding or driving, as the humour might be. The queen did not ride on horseback ; modest women in our country never do. The manners of Europeans are different ; in all things God has made the two people different. The queen made long journeys in a silver howdah on an elephant, or in her state palanquin, or *tonjon*,<sup>1</sup> carried by slaves in red liveries.

<sup>1</sup> *Tāmshān*.

In the house a room was always set apart for dining, and used for no other purpose. There were no large tables, and high chairs in it, as in the Sahibs' dining-rooms, but small tables were brought in with the entertainment, on which the silver dishes were placed; and the queen sat on her usual cushions, with a large richly-embroidered pillow at her back, as at the durbar. Her arms and face were washed after each meal, for she was scrupulously clean. Even the small tables or stools for the reception of the dishes were often of pure silver, and the floor was covered with the richest carpets. Chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and large mirrors with gilt frames covered the walls. The royal *dustar khwan*<sup>1</sup>, or table cloth, was composed of two large pieces of handsome broad cloth, designed in patterns of flowers, and ornamental devices, covering a piece of leather of equal size, sewn up all round. The table-cloth was spread in the centre of the apartment at dinner-time, and all the dinner apparatus was placed on it. Much ice was used, both for cooling sherbets and the hookah-water. The queen drank no wine or strong drinks. As to the king, how can I tell what he drank in his own apartments? But when with the queen he drank nothing but sherbets, and such drinks as a Mussulman is allowed to drink.

There were several drawing-rooms in each palace. The centre was usually occupied by a round table, of rare woods, or marble, or crystal, or silver-gilt, and on this were placed ornaments of all kinds, china, gold, silver, lacquered ware, vases, and clocks. The ornaments came from China, from Delhi, and from Europe.<sup>2</sup> Couches, of the European fashion, covered with rich bright damask or silk, were also to be found in the drawing-rooms; and, in each such room, one bed was always ready-made for reclining upon in the day-time, covered with some rich counterpane.

The dressing-rooms had the usual mirrors and chandeliers, with boxes all round the room for clothes and jewellery—no presses, or almirahs, or chests of drawers, as European ladies have. The furniture of the bed and bath-room was all of pure

<sup>1</sup> *Dastarkhwan*.

<sup>2</sup> Many of them from Birmingham. [W.K.]

silver. There were also two golden bedsteads in the palace, which the ex-king took with him to Calcutta.<sup>1</sup>

The queen's treasury was guarded by soldiers, and there was an apartment adjoining it, called the *tykhanah*,<sup>2</sup> not an underground apartment, for retiring to in very warm weather, as the word usually means, but a store-house for spare clothes, jewels, and such-like. In this *tykhanah* there was one large box full of a mixture of rupees and gold mohurs, called *khichry*,<sup>3</sup> from the dish of that name. It had been filled and placed there by Umjid Aly's father, and was only to be used in time of extraordinary need. All this was spent in the reign of her son, the ex-king, Wajid Aly Shah. Once when the queen was away at the garden-house, for a fortnight or so, some of the female slaves left behind broke into this room, and succeeded in opening one of the boxes of jewels. A girl of about sixteen years of age, whom the queen had promised in marriage to an attendant of the king, was the ringleader in this theft. The queen had been very kind to her, and it was a case of signal ingratitude. Only one box had been opened, and that so unskillfully, that great injury had been done to the jewels within. The property had been taken from it during the night, and next morning traces of the burglary and of the theft were apparent. The queen was informed of it, and returned to Lucknow. Suspicion fell upon the slave-girl in question, and she was scourged with canes upon the back, until she confessed. She pointed out in what places in Lucknow the property would be found, and a good deal of it was recovered, but much injured in value.

The queen usually gave audience between the morning and evening meals. Distressed women from the country of all classes would come to her, with petitions, with complaints, with presents. She was ready to hear them all, to do the best she could for all. It was a source of great gain to us her servants, for none got an audience without paying handsomely

<sup>1</sup> These golden bedsteads were made in the time of Saadut Aly Khan, and it is said that one of them has been melted down recently in Calcutta, by order of the ex-king. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> *Takhtānah*, an underground room.

<sup>3</sup> *Khichri*, rice cooked with peas and spices.

for it. Whoever came was kept waiting, and put off from day to day, with various excuses, until we thought we could get nothing more out of them, and then, and not till then, were they admitted—just as the native clerks and others do in the Sahibs' Kucherry,<sup>1</sup> where the Sahibs administer justice. Would the poor people not complain? you ask. Of course not. Do they complain at Kucherry? Is it not the custom? Will the word of one stranger be believed before that of twenty servants? Well, perhaps it was wrong. But it is the custom of this country. God has made Europeans different. You cannot change the nature of man.

<sup>1</sup> *Kachakri*.



## CHAPTER III

### THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

EVERYBODY has some enemies, and, good and religious as our queen was, she too had her enemies. These were chiefly the low-born women whom her son married when he became king. It was customary, when the son wished to contract a new marriage,<sup>1</sup> to send the bride to the queen-mother for her approval first. My mistress objected to some, but he took them into his harem all the same; and when she found her remonstrances and her opposition useless, she ceased to object to any of them, approving of all he sent. He had all kinds of wives. Some of them princesses to whom he had been married in his father's lifetime, but when he became king he had black women, Abyssinians, high caste and low, young and old, Mussulman and Hindu, all kinds of women for wives; and my mistress never recognized and never acknowledged any of them as queens, except the high-born princesses to whom he had been first married.

The chief wife<sup>2</sup> of Wajid Aly, and the mother of the heir-apparent,<sup>3</sup> had not ceremonial honours, and was not attended by a state equal to that of my mistress, and this was the cause of much ill-feeling. Several attempts were made on my mistress's life, and they were all traced to the harem of the king, her son.

Umjid Aly Shah had died of an ulcer, or some such sore on his shoulder, and I have heard the queen, my mistress, say

<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of his life Wajid Ali Shah contracted numerous marriages in the hope, it is said, that the British Government would provide for the widows.

<sup>2</sup> Mulk-a-Mukhadarai Uzama Nawab Badshah Mahal Sahiba—generally known as Khān Mahal, the chief wife of Wajid Ali Shah, was a niece of the minister Nawab Ali Naqi Khan.

<sup>3</sup> Her son Wali Ahad Sahib Alam Kaiwan Qadr Mirza Mahommad Hamid Ali Bahadur accompanied his grandmother to England. He returned to Calcutta and died during his father's lifetime.

that the sore must have been poisoned by some one, most probably by one of the physicians, bribed by some one who benefited most by his death. Had Umjid Aly Shah lived, I have no doubt the crime would have been found out, and the criminal discovered ; but when he died, who was going to tell ? who would protect the physician who asserted poison had been used ? what witnesses would come forward against the instigator of the crime, when that man the instigator was all-powerful ? Umjid Aly Shah had warned the queen not to allow Wajid Aly to ascend the throne in case he, Umjid Aly, died ; but what could she do ? She was but a woman. Wajid Aly was the eldest son,<sup>1</sup> and the English Resident,<sup>2</sup> who knew nothing of palace wives perhaps, declared that the eldest son must succeed. And so Wajid Aly became king, and the fate of Oudh was bad, for the wickedness of Lucknow was great. How do I know that ? Does not every one know that Lucknow was as the cities that God burnt up once for wickedness ? Is it not written in the Koran ?

I do not say that Wajid Aly poisoned his father, or that Khash Mehal, his chief wife, tried to murder the queen, my mistress ; but I do say that, in the palace, such things were spoken of, and many of the slaves believed such stories to be truths. ' Would a son murder his father ? would a daughter-in-law attempt the life of her mother-in-law ? ' These were the questions I would ask, and they would reply, ' A kingdom is at stake—the prize is great—God is good, but Lucknow is very wicked.'

I know that, if she could, my mistress would have placed her second son, whom we called the General Sahib,<sup>3</sup> because he was commander-in-chief, on the throne. But the English

<sup>1</sup> This is incorrect. Mustafa Ali was the eldest son, and had been recognized as heir-apparent both by his father and grandfather. After Amjad Ali's accession to the throne, Mustafa Ali was repudiated and put under restraint by his father on account of serious misconduct and Wajid Ali was proclaimed heir-apparent.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Richmond.

<sup>3</sup> Mirza Sikandar Hashmat Bahadur, whose birth-name was Jawad Ali Khan ; he was the third son. Mirza Sulaiman Qadr was the youngest.

would have the eldest son, Wajid Aly ; and so Wajid Aly was crowned, and now Oudh is no longer a kingdom. But what have I to do with making of kings and queens, and raising and upsetting kingdoms ? I am but a slave, or rather I was but a slave, and I can only tell what I saw and heard.

During the Mohurrim all the chief servants got mingled together in the ceremonial visits of the king's family. Khash Mehal's servants, and Wajid Aly's, and we, all met in the various palaces often, during the Mohurrim, for ceremonial visits were then frequent and usual. It was, then, during the Mohurrim that I was one day preparing the queen's hookah, as usual, in the Chutter Munzil Palace. I cannot tell what year it was ; what had I to do with years and dates ? But it was five or six years before the English took the kingdom. It was my custom before putting on the mouthpiece, and taking the hookah to the queen, to put my own mouth to the end of the snake,<sup>1</sup> and draw it for a few minutes, so as to ignite the tobacco thoroughly. I was doing so on this occasion, when I felt some fine tasteless powder drawn up into my mouth, for which I could not account. I had cleaned the snake thoroughly in the morning, and at first I thought ashes from the chillum,<sup>2</sup> or bowl, had got through ; but that was impossible, as the smoke was drawn through the water. I fortunately did not swallow the powder, but spat it out. I suspected poison at once, and went to the queen to tell her so. She only laughed at me, and said to her attendant, ' Go, and see what strange mare's nest the unfledged wit of Ellhu Jan has discovered.' I showed the attendant some of the white impalpable dust, and she had the hookah snake carefully cut open. The white powder was discovered scattered over the tube inside. How do I know how they got it there ? Those who do the devil's work will get assistance from the devil, I suppose. But there it was, plain and unmistakable. Very fine, and very thinly scattered ; all that was loose I had drawn up. A hakeem,<sup>3</sup> or physician, was called by the queen to

<sup>1</sup> The long elastic tube of the hookah is called the ' snake'.  
[W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> *Chillum*.

<sup>3</sup> *Hakim*.

examine the powder, and he said it was poison, and advised that I should be punished—may evil light on the grey beard of him!—but the queen was good and just, and said, 'No, no! this is not Elihu Jan's doing; my enemy hath done this.' Can I tell who she meant was her enemy? Yes, I could guess. That enemy is still alive in Calcutta—the chief wife of the ex-king—Khash Mehal. But the queen may have been mistaken, of course. There was no proof. The English want proofs of everything, as if people called witnesses to watch them attempt to poison a queen. Mashallah!<sup>1</sup> but the ways of the English are wonderful, and past all finding out.

Nor was that the only attempt of the enemy. The bed, as I already mentioned, was always covered with a rich counterpane, and, when prepared for the night, was not turned down from the pillow, as we prepare the beds for the Sahibs. Often, particularly during the hot weather, the queen lay down on the counterpane, not under it, the attendants fanning her and brushing away the flies. It was again during the Mohurrim. The queen, wearied with the prayers and ceremonies of the morning, and with her rigid fast, came into her bedroom to lie down. She had a high pillow, so as to use the hookah without inconvenience, as she reclined. I was preparing the hookah, and was just in the act of carrying it into the room, when a great commotion arose in the bedroom. A snake, in a charmed or comatose state, was found coiled up under the counterpane, near the foot of the bed. A search was made, and outside was found the earthen jar in which the snake had been brought. The queen had the snake restored to the earthen jar, and then held a consultation as to what was best to be done. It could not have come there by accident. That was quite out of the question. The snake was a deadly cobra-di-capello, about three feet long.

Early next morning, by beat of drum, all the snake-charmers of Lucknow were ordered to attend at the queen's palace, and guards were sent round to collect them. As the snake that had been found in the queen's bed was in a charmed state, it was evident some of these men had been employed

<sup>1</sup> *Mā shā allāh*, God forbid!

to charm it, and could give evidence on the subject. It was explained to them that no harm would happen from confession, as whoever was employed was doubtless kept in ignorance of the cause. But they all denied—liars they are and were. Those that discover crime and hidden things by ordeals and otherwise, were then called in, and they pointed out one of the snake-charmers, who looked frightened and confused, as the party who had charmed the snake. He still denied. But the queen was determined to make him confess. His back was bared. Ice was first rubbed over it, and then the rattan was applied. He got about twenty lashes, when he offered to confess everything. The queen was merciful, and his hands were removed from the split bamboo in which they had been placed, according to custom, when whipping was administered. He was released, and confessed that he had charmed the snake. The evening before, he said, the head darogah or gate-keeper of one of the king's wives had come to him, asking him to charm this snake, so that it would lie perfectly still, wherever it was placed, for eighteen or twenty hours, and he had done so, and given the darogah back the snake, and knew nothing more of the matter. The darogah was called, and of course denied it all—what else could be expected? But on collecting the servants who had had access to the bedroom that morning, the finders-out of crime by ordeal were again called, and pointed out the maidservant who had been bribed by the darogah to put the snake into the queen's bed. She too denied. Will the father of lies let his children speak the truth? They were both flogged severely—the darogah and the maidservant—and thrown separately into prison, into underground dungeons of one of the old palaces. The queen was merciful, and would not have them put to death, although the king, her son, advised her to have them both impaled. The snake-charmer was allowed to go free, but of course he will carry the marks of the scourging on his back all his life. The cane was not laid on lightly in the palace, you may be sure.

I have no doubt of the guilt of the darogah and the maidservant—none whatever. When the ordeal is used to discover crime, it is God who decides, not man. The girl was a

slave like myself, but unmarried—not a bad-looking girl, very merry and lively, but too fond of ornaments. She sold herself for them, I dare say. What if the diviners of crime had pointed me out? you ask. If they had, I should have been scourged and imprisoned in the underground dungeon, full of rats and vermin. Yes, of course I should; but I tell you it was impossible. God is good. You want witnesses and proofs again. Wah! wah! witnesses and proofs may do for England, but we trust in God. You could get fifty witnesses in Lucknow at two annas (threepence) a day to swear anything, in any way.<sup>1</sup> But why should Khash Mehal wish for the queen-mother's death? you ask. Why do people like to be great and powerful? guards, attendants, a band, silver-sticks in waiting, priority in all processions?—these were the right of my mistress; and, if she was removed, Khash Mehal would have been the first woman in Oudh. I know of no other reason why she should wish the queen-mother dead.

Even from her own daughter the queen got but little sympathy. Her son, the general, who accompanied her to England, was her greatest friend, and him she could trust in all things. The general had no easy part to play in Lucknow. He had a very handsome wife, and he was afraid if his brother the king saw her, he would take her to himself. The king wanted to see her, but the general never allowed her to come to court, and changed her residence frequently, and his mother, my mistress, helped him. She loved the general much better than she loved Wajid Aly, and the general was a good man and just to woman.

The marriage of the queen's daughter with Nawab Sath Chood Dowlah<sup>2</sup> had not been a happy one; and the queen

<sup>1</sup> It is quite evident that there is nothing in either of the above instances of attempted murder, if indeed they were such, to prove the complicity of any of the king's household, even as Elihu Jan relates the story. Her strong impressions on the subject were doubtless those of the household to which she was attached. [W. K.]

<sup>2</sup> This is probably a misprint for Sarfarazu-d-daulah, to whom the queen's daughter Ashrafu-u-nissa (or Afsar Bahu Sahiba) was married. He was the son of Muniru-d-daulah of Kalpi, who had married Roshan Ara, the sister of Amjad Ali Shah.

sympathized with her, and often remonstrated with the nawab. Yet when the queen called on her daughter, at the time of the Mohurrim, and told her of this attempt on her life, the answer she got was : ' Your life will do you little good at your age. Are you not old ? are not your teeth gone ? can you live long ? ' Perhaps it was in the bitterness of her own heart that the shahzadee (princess) so spoke, but she was wrong so to speak. The queen was angry, and ordered her chair forthwith, without giving any reply, and went away, and several months passed before there was any reconciliation between them. She too, the shahzadee, would have taken a higher position if the queen, my mistress, died. From all I could find out, after living more than twenty years in a palace, there is less natural affection there than in the mud cabin where all are poor. But it is not right for a slave to judge the king or the royal family—the queen taught us that out of the Koran ; and the hearts of princes are past finding out. Are we not all in the hands of God ?

## CHAPTER IV

### MINOR TROUBLES

THE real sorrows of the queen began with the death of her husband, Umjid Aly Shah, but she had apparent sorrows enough even when he was alive. He had been a long time heir apparent, and did not come to the throne till he was advanced in middle life, and only reigned five years. It was very shortly after his reign began that I was brought to the palace, and, child though I was, I remember every one used to say he was a model of a husband, because he had never taken any other wife. The queen's children, three boys and one girl, were all born before her husband came to the throne.

The only apparently cruel thing I can remember the queen having ever done, was the result of jealousy. When Umjid Aly had been nearly a year or so on the throne, he began to distinguish one of the queen's attendant girls by presents, and by sending to her kind messages. As this girl was the servant usually in charge of the youngest prince, then an infant, the king had many opportunities of speaking to her, and the queen thought the presents he gave her were prompted by his affection for the child. The household, however, knew better, and began to treat her with more respect, and to call her by higher titles, when they saw that the king was really attached to her. Whether the king went through any ceremony of marriage with her, or not, I do not know. Certain it is, however, that the queen came to hear of the affection he displayed, and of the consequent assumption by her servant of titles of honour and a proud carriage, when not actually in the queen's presence.

Now the queen was known to all to be a resolute determined woman. She was learned, could read and write Persian and Arabic, was a princess of Delhi by birth and a queen by marriage—was such a woman to allow a base-born slave to step between her and her lord, she being the mother of the



king's children? When she once expressed a desire for anything, she always got it, no matter who opposed. If it was not granted at once, she neither ate nor drank till either the request was granted, or at least a solemn promise was made to grant it. But she was wise too, and never injured the kingdom by her demands. Sole lord of the king's heart, mother of his children, was she to allow a rival to carry off his affections from her? Certainly not.

The attendant in question, I forget her name, was one afternoon sleeping soundly, fatigued by exercise, and overcome by the sultriness of the day. The apartment in which she slept was at the end of a gallery leading from the queen's private rooms to those of public reception. The queen accidentally passed by, and saw her there asleep. The attendant was a handsome girl, full grown, with a fine figure, and through some accident had never been married. It was whispered in the palace that she would one day be mother of a royal child, whether truly or falsely I do not know.

The queen passed on and said nothing till she came to her own apartment. She then called to her one of her most trusted servants—an old woman who had been with her from her maidenhood, who had come with her from Delhi. How the thing was managed afterwards I do not know, but soon all the palace was in an uproar, roused by the screams of the attendant who had been sleeping a few minutes before so soundly, dreaming perhaps of the affection of a king. She had been sleeping, I heard, with face and neck uncovered, the usual muslin veil having been thrown aside in consequence of the heat; and some description of firework, or explosive substance, had been let off so close to her as to burn her severely on the face and neck. The queen was very sorry for the pain she suffered, and was doing all she could to alleviate it, when the king came in. A dark scowl was on his face. The girl was removed by his orders, in order that proper medical aid might be obtained. She was long ill. Her beauty was clean gone for ever, and she was soon forgotten. I do not know what became of her afterwards.

I was only a child when all this happened, but I remember

the screams and the bustle, and the queen's sorrow. She cried over the poor girl, her heart was good. It was never proved, of course, that she had anything to do with it, but I believe she had, all the same. There was an investigation, of course, and it was all set down as the result of accident ; but they say that the king was for a long time terribly angry. His anger, however, was little matter, for the queen ruled him still. There was but one will between the two, and that will was hers.

But was not all this very cruel on the queen's part ? No, not cruel, but in reality very merciful. Any other queen would have had the slave put to death, and her body thrown into the river. If I were a queen—well it's no use saying what I should do if I were a queen, but no slave should come between me and my husband. Of that you may be sure. Cruel ? No, my mistress the queen was never cruel. She was pious and devout and charitable, and read the Koran daily. Had her husband and her son been as good as she was, God would never have taken the kingdom from the family. Was not all the fault in this case her husband's ?

Yes, the king had his revenge nevertheless. He took a flower-girl of Lucknow,<sup>1</sup> and married her by *muda* (an inferior or left-handed marriage peculiar to the Sheeahs).<sup>2</sup> She had a palace given to her, and was made great and wealthy, but the queen knew nothing of it, as I heard, until cannon announced the birth of a son. When she subsequently reproached

<sup>1</sup> Malika Ahad Taj-i-mukhadiat Nawab Faghfur Mahal Sahiba, an attendant upon Juia Begam, a widow of Sa'adat Ali Khan. She was the mother of Amjad Ali Shah's youngest son, Sulaiman Qadr. She died August 1847, a few months after Amjad Ali Shah. (Also see Sleeman, *Journey through Oude*, ii. 144-5.) The Begum Kotbi (now the Post Office) was built as a residence for this queen in 1844.

<sup>2</sup> The regular marriage is known as Nikha and must be performed before witnesses. A Shiah is permitted to have only four Nikhai wives. The ceremony of the *muda* marriage is similar to the Nikha, except that the contract is for a limited period only ; it need not be performed before witnesses, and a *muda* wife has no claim upon her husband's property after his death, excepting only the sum settled upon her. There is no limit to the number of *muda* wives a man is permitted to possess.

the king on the subject, his answer was, that in the Koran many more wives were allowed than he had ever taken or intended to take. Before all the servants she spoke loudly and bitterly in reply, saying, 'True, it is allowed, and you have waited till the best years of your life are gone, and now, in your old age, you take a flower-girl to wife—a flower-girl fresh from the bazaar. Your servants, who have bought flowers from her, are daily in your court, and say in their hearts, as they look on you, "Behold the husband of the flower-girl, from whom we bought flowers in the bazaar on such a day!"' The king rose and went away in a rage; and the queen's attendants said to her, 'He will not come again.' 'He *shall* not come,' was her answer, but it was only in bravado she said it, for when she was in her own room she cried bitterly.

The young wife, the flower-girl, was called *mulika*, or princess, after the birth of her son, but never in the queen's presence, nor was that son ever spoken of before her as *sahib-ahem*, or *shahzadha*, or prince. Her servants and attendants well knew she would not allow it.

But, as I have said, Umjid Aly Shah only reigned a few years, and when he first fell ill he showed his affection for the queen my mistress throughout, till his death. I do not know what his sickness was. I only know he was sick, and that the immediate cause of death was an ulcer or sore on his shoulder, which gave him great pain, and which the queen afterwards believed had been poisoned by one of his physicians, bribed so to do, as I have said before.

A few days before his death the *mulika*, daughter of the fruiterer, sent her son, in order that he might get his father's blessing. She did not venture to come herself, for the queen would never have given her permission to enter her apartments, but she hoped there would be mercy for her infant son, and she was right. She knew the queen had a good heart.

When the *sahibahum* came we knew not how to announce him to the queen. To give him his title would offend her to omit it would probably offend the king, and the king was dying. After some delay, at length one of the king's eldest

eunuchs approached him, saying: 'May it please your majesty, lord of the universe, protector of the poor, the infant son of Mulika Ahud has been sent to pay his respects to your majesty.' 'Let the sahibalum be admitted,' was the king's order. 'Sahibalum!' echoed the queen, 'Sahibalum! What king's daughter or what queen's daughter is his mother? What was her dowry? and whence did it come? Bring in the boy.' The infant was brought in. We slaves expected that she would have spat on him, or at the least taken no notice of him. But we were mistaken. Who shall understand the hearts of princes? She was a good and a kind mistress. She spoke kindly to the infant, took him on her knee, and said to him, 'What is your mother doing?' 'She is crying, because my father, the king, is so sick,' was the child's answer. Tears collected in the queen's eyes, she patted the boy's cheek, and kissed him, and the king, who was lying down, took her hand in his, and said to her: 'Begum, his mother is nothing. I give the boy to you. Love him for my sake, when I am gone.' The queen wept, forgave him freely, promised to befriend the boy, but added, 'Why do you talk so? you will soon be well again.' So little idea had she that he was so soon to die!

After the death of Umjid Aly Shah, the frequent and constant *muda* marriages of her son Wajid Aly gave the queen much trouble and annoyance. So far as I am aware, he contracted only one *nikha* (full and complete marriage), and that was with the daughter of his vizier.<sup>1</sup> I speak of the time subsequent to his father's death. He had more than one *nikha* wife before that, of whom Khash Mehal was chief.

<sup>1</sup> See a rather cryptic letter from Sleeman to Lord Dalhousie dated November 11, 1853: 'The minister has by his intrigues put himself so much in the power of the knave whom I suspect, that he dares not do anything to offend him . . . The man is biding his time, as he has often done with former ministers; and the time would have come ere this, had not the king, to save himself, married one of the minister's pretty daughters.

'The king's chief consort was the niece of the minister and her son is the heir-apparent; so that it was her interest, and that of her uncle, the minister, to get rid of the king as soon as possible. She is a profligate woman, and the king's mother is supposed to have given him a hint of his danger. He took a liking to one of the daughters and

After contracting marriage with his daughter, Wajid Aly was very intimate with the vizier, often allowing him a seat on his own carpet at durbar, contrary to custom, and contrary to the remonstrances of the queen my mistress. This familiarity of the king with her husband, caused the wife of the vizier to assume an importance and dignity of demeanour to which she was not entitled either by position or birth.

I remember on one occasion, the wife of the vizier called on the queen my mistress at an hour earlier than visitors were usually admitted. It so happened that the queen was up and dressed, but, as she was very tenacious of her dignity, and would not allow any one to infringe upon it, she sent word to the vizier's wife that, as the usual reception hour had not arrived, she must wait. The visitor was annoyed at this, and said loudly, 'Am I not mother of a queen? Is not my daughter married to the king? If half the power of the state is hers, do I not share in the other half?' The servants, of course, explained that they were only obeying orders. At the usual hour, the vizier's wife was introduced, and the queen received her with great dignity. The vizier's wife, after the usual ceremonies, complained of the queen's servants, and my mistress answered that they had received their orders from her, and could not be blamed for executing them. It was to be regretted, she added, that the vizier's wife had consented to bandy words with them—they being rude and uneducated. The vizier's wife made no suitable apology, but went away in a huff.

That afternoon the queen saw her son, the king, and explained the matter to him, stating that she would not receive the vizier's wife again unless she made a proper apology for her rudeness. The king sent for his father-in-law, and next day the vizier's wife came to the queen's durbar, threw herself at her feet, and begged pardon for her rudeness in arrogating to herself equality with a princess of the royal house of Delhi, widow and mother of kings.

married her, in order to make it the minister's interest to keep him alive as long as possible.'—*Journey through Oude*, ii. 410-11.

This lady, the daughter of Nawab Ali Naqi Khan, was known as Akhtar Mahal.

## CHAPTER V

### BAHARA NISSA

OF all the attendants of the queen, there was none enjoyed so much of her confidence, or to whom she showed so much favour, as Bahara Nissa. Bahara Nissa, with her father and mother and sister, came from the Punjab, and the whole family were proficient in music and singing. Her father, Kala Baha, usually played the drum or tambourine, whilst the two girls danced, and the mother sang. Both the girls were tall, slim, light-coloured, and handsome. They were considered highly educated in Lucknow, and their father had taken every pains to render them accomplished. On their journey from the Punjab to Oudh, a man of some property, Hafiz, had attached himself to the party, out of love for Bahara Nissa. But she would never marry him. Kala Baha probably expected that, in such a court as that of Wajid Aly Shah, their accomplishments of singing and dancing would raise them to the highest pitch of favour; and he was not mistaken.

When they were introduced at court, the eldest girl, Rushkee Alum, was married by the king forthwith, by muta marriage, and this was the only one of his muta marriages that the queen my mistress honoured by her presence. Generally, indeed, when she saw all her son's wives drawn up to receive her, as they sometimes were—for instance, at Nowa Roz,<sup>1</sup> on New Year's day—she could not refrain from laughing to see the congregation of all kinds of women, and walked on with her handkerchief at her mouth, receiving their salaams and congratulations. She was a princess born, and they were chiefly women of no rank by birth.

When Rushkee Alum was thus added to the number of the king's wives by muta, Bahara Nissa was taken into the service

<sup>1</sup> Nauroz. See Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations on Mussulmans of India* (ed. Crooke), p. 152 sqq.

of the queen my mistress. The father and mother of the two girls also got apartments in the palace, and Bahara Nissa<sup>1</sup> entered into an agreement not to marry for five years. She got a thousand rupees a month from the queen for her attendance, besides rich and valuable presents on all festive occasions. It was not usual for the queen to take up thus with dancing or singing girls, or with strangers of any kind, and therefore, Bahara Nissa's case being so exceptional, she had all the more influence in consequence. The queen trusted her in every matter, and her good sense and prudence, for two years at least, justified this confidence.

At the end of about two years, however, it so happened that a rancee, widow of a rajah from Nanpara, in the Baraitch district, came to court to prefer some complaint of oppression to the queen, accompanied by her brother-in-law, the late rajah's younger brother. The young man's name was Pearee Sahib, and he was tall and good-looking, and of a light colour. Bahara Nissa saw him in the court-yard more than once, and was smitten with love for him. What! can we conquer our own hearts? Of course, she knew it was contrary to her agreement—she was endangering all her court favour, everything, and yet she persevered. She sent a message to him, to say she loved him. He came by stealth. She danced and sang for him, and he was captivated; and they bribed a moollah to marry them. They were married thus privately, and the queen was ignorant of it, and but few of the household even were aware of it. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of her family, Pearee Sahib lived near the palace, and Bahara Nissa saw him constantly by stealth. He was her lawful husband. She had never been married before.

It was about three or four months after this marriage that Hafiz, the Mussulman gentleman who had followed Bahara Nissa in the vain hope of marrying her, took very ill, and died.

<sup>1</sup> Outram in a Narrative on the rise and progress of hostilities in the district of Nanparah (*Oudh Papers*, 1856, p. 7) refers to Baharu-n-nissa in this connexion: 'The younger wife of Munour Ally Khan, and the daughter of Mehdi Kooli Khan, through the intercession and good offices of Baharoon Nissa (dancer in the employ of the King's mother, Jenab Aulca), received the management of Nanparah.'

He sent the most pressing messages to her, asking her to visit him once during his illness before he died ; but she would not. He wrote to the queen, and the queen gave her permission to go ; but she was obstinate, and would not. Perhaps she feared poison or assassination at his hands, on account of her marriage. How can I tell ? But I do not believe he knew anything of her marriage. At all events, after eight or nine days' constant suffering, and always calling upon her name, he died, alone and unfriended by her, for whom he had sacrificed his family, his country, and his wealth.

Bahara Nissa was now likely to become a mother and feared exceedingly lest the queen should become aware of it, and of the cause, her secret marriage. Days and nights of anxiety and of alarm did Bahara Nissa pass, pondering over what would be her probable fate—for the punishments in a court are severe. At length, she resolved to take medicines, and to produce miscarriage. The queen saw that her favourite was changed, and that gloom and unhappiness were taking the place of her former life, spirits, and gaiety ; but the cause was unknown and unsuspected. At length, Bahara Nissa was confined to her chamber, in great suffering, and unable to continue her attendance. The queen questioned her servants, and one of her old faithful slaves, thinking that Bahara Nissa's career at court was now at an end, told the whole story. At first the queen would not believe it ; but when the facts were repeated again and again, she took one of her oldest and most confidential nurses with her, and went direct to Bahara Nissa's chamber. There, of course, she soon discovered the truth of the statement she had heard, and she returned, vexed and angry, to her own apartment.

And now behold how good and kind a mistress our queen was ! Another queen would have had both Bahara Nissa and her husband impaled upon red-hot iron stakes, or taken some other vengeance equally signal, for was not punishment well merited by both of them ? But our queen was not such. She simply put Pearee Sahib into prison, and banished Bahara Nissa from her presence, giving her, however, an ample



allowance, and sending word to her that the crime she had committed in destroying her infant was greater than in breaking her engagement.

Bahara Nissa was long ill. Her life was in danger. Her sister exerted herself in behalf of Pearce Sahib, and he was released after three days. On her recovery, Bahara Nissa came often to pay her respects to the queen, but for a long time she was not admitted, nor were her letters and petitions answered. But the queen's heart was soft, and in a few months she relented and Bahara Nissa was restored to place and favour.

Years rolled on, and there were rumours that all was not right. It was said the English were very angry with the king, who spent all his time in dancing and singing and fiddling—sometimes in female, sometimes in male attire, surrounded by his wives and eunuchs. The queen my mistress often remonstrated with him, and cried bitterly over his follies and his inattention to her remonstrances. But it was of no avail. Bahara Nissa was a faithful attendant to her, and was faithful also to her husband—a rare thing in a dancing girl.

At length the catastrophe came. One morning the queen was dressing after her bath, everything as usual, when a large sealed letter was brought in to her. The messenger said it was from the vizier, and was most important. The queen read Persian like a moonshi, and immediately, half-dressed as she was, opened the letter and read it. I was preparing the hookah in the same room. I saw the letter opened. I saw the queen's face turning paler and paler as she read it. At length, holding the letter in her hands, and without stopping to put on her shoes, she walked rapidly out into the courtyard, exclaiming, 'The kingdom is destroyed!' It was in the Dowlut Khana, and the courtyard alone separated us from the king's apartments. Thither went the queen, bareheaded and barefooted, hastily. Several of us followed; one with a muslin sheet or veil, another with the shoes, another with an umbrella. She pushed us aside as we offered one thing and another. 'No, no' said she, 'I must do without attendance, as I must do without a throne—perhaps without a home or food—in my old age.'

And the queen wept as she went, and Bahara Nissa wept as she followed, and we all went after them, and lamented with beating of breasts, although we knew not for certain what calamity had happened.

The queen walked without ceremony or announcement straight into the room where the king her son was sitting. None hindered her, all made way for her, wondering and in silence.

The king was sitting alone and crying. When he saw his mother the queen enter, he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud. She made him three salaams as she advanced, saying, 'Are you now satisfied? Have you got at last the wages of your dancing, your singing, and your fiddling? Have I not often told you it would come to this? Did any of your fathers sing and dance and fiddle in women's clothes?' Bahara Nissa alone ventured to remonstrate with the queen. The king said never a word.

After some little expostulation on the part of Bahara Nissa, the queen ceased her reproaches, and said, 'It is true. All this is too late now; leave us alone.' We all turned and went out, and the queen alone remained with her son, taking her muslin veil as we departed. About two or three o'clock in the afternoon, the English resident<sup>1</sup> came, and there was another long conference, at which the queen was present. In the evening soldiers came into Lucknow from the cantonments, and the cannon were removed from the palaces, and we knew that the king's reign was at an end, and that the English raj had begun.

It was at this trying time that Bahara Nissa greatly comforted the queen by her counsels and her sympathy. She was an invaluable attendant, always calm, self-possessed, and prudent.

The great men of the kingdom came to offer troops and munitions of war to fight against the English, but the king refused. They then came to the queen my mistress, and she took a night to think over it; and next morning, as Bahara Nissa had advised, she also said 'No.' That very day the queen announced her intention of going to England to us all. 'I will go,' said she, 'to the English queen. She is also the

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Outram.

mother of a son, and I will ask her not to take my son's crown from him. Has she not crowns and kingdoms and wealth enough? Must all the world belong to one?' 'How shall you go?' said we; 'you that fear a river so much—how shall you go, and cross the great black water, the boundless sea?' But she would not listen to us, and Bahara Nissa began to prepare for the journey, for Bahara Nissa had said she would take her husband with her, and go with the queen to England. The king went to Calcutta a fortnight afterwards, and was no more a king, except in name.

One of the preparations for the journey consisted in the construction of a large brick chamber, built under a reservoir of water in the palace, for the reception of jewels, gold and silver furniture of all kinds, and other treasure which the queen did not want to take with her to England. The water was drained off. An underground compartment was constructed, and the valuables were placed in it, covered with matting and oiled cloth, or wax-cloth. A flat brick roof supported on beams was then built, and this roof was the bottom of the tank or reservoir. The water was let in, and all appeared to be as before. It is said that several lacs' worth (or tens of thousands of pounds' worth) of property was deposited in that chamber, and so secretly was the work done, that only a few even of our household knew of it. Bahara Nissa trusted and befriended me, and I knew it.

At length all things were ready for the journey to England, and the queen, with some of her attendants, Bahara Nissa and myself amongst the number, started for Calcutta. All the rest of the household had been discharged or pensioned off.

The queen took water enough with her on starting from Lucknow to supply her till her arrival in Calcutta. Why she should have done so, I don't know. There did not appear to be any want of water on the road.

Bahara Nissa took her husband with her to England; and on the queen's death, made the pilgrimage with him to Mecca, before returning to Lucknow. Gholam Hussain, my husband, accompanied me. Arrived safely in Calcutta, the queen my mistress resolved to visit her son's chief wife,

Khash Mehal, and to depart in friendship with all. There had been no communication between them since the attempt to poison the hookah, formerly described. The queen was living with the ex-king in Calcutta, and, in pursuance of her plan of being at enmity with none before her departure, went one day unannounced into Khash Mehal's apartment. Khash Mehal saw her enter, got up quickly, and left the room. The queen then turned to Bahara Nissa, and said, 'Here am I, the head and the elder, stooping to effect a reconciliation with my daughter-in-law, whom I have never injured, and my face is blackened, I am treated with contempt.' Bahara Nissa went to the attendants of Khash Mehal, got her own sister also to use her influence; and just as the queen my mistress was turning to depart, Khash Mehal came into the apartment, threw herself on the queen's neck, and embraced her. Thus happily was a reunion effected before the queen's final departure to Europe where she died.

Bitterly, very bitterly, did the queen weep the day she took leave of her son, the ex-king and his children, to go on board the steamer that was to carry her off. Bahara Nissa accompanied her, and managed everything for her. She was always wise and prudent. Evil luck was there, however; for, as the goods were being handed into the steamer, one box of ornaments dropped into the water and was lost. We all regarded it as an evil omen, and the queen, as we all know, never returned. Her son the general went with her.

On the death of the queen in Europe, Bahara Nissa returned to Lucknow, and lived with her husband Pearee Sahib. She is living there now. They are both alive, and although her beauty is not now what it once was, yet her form is still elegant, her black hair is rich and lustrous, and three feet long, and her husband loves her. Children! no, she has no children. That is the punishment of her crime, just as my being childless is my evil fate, in that I eat up my mother's life at my birth. God's will be done. I take a little opium, and am content.

There is no more to be said of Bahara Nissa: but what

of the treasure that was buried under the cistern? you ask. It is a long story. When I returned to Lucknow, with my husband, he resumed his shop near the palace. But the English began knocking down bazaars and planting grass everywhere, and, amongst the rest, our bazaar was swept away. We lived for some time on the jewels and ornaments I had collected in the queen's service, and we were both getting poorer when, just before the mutiny broke out, one of the king's muta wives then in Lucknow, mother of a son, Brijis Kudr by name, asked me to live with her. I went, and, when the mutiny broke out a few months after, the sepoys came and took Brijis Kudr<sup>1</sup> to make him king in the room of his father in Calcutta. He was but a child, and his mother was very averse to his being made king, for she knew herself, and many told her, it would not be for long, and that when the English caught him, they would hang him. She threw herself at the feet of the sepoy officer who came to take her son to the great mosque to be crowned, and cried out, 'He is my only son—spare him—he is not the rightful heir—you know he is not—do not make him king—between you and the English he will be sure to be killed.' But some people's hearts are hard as grinding-stones, and the sepoys' hearts were not soft. They took him, and made him king, and his mother was treated with royal state, but she knew it was all mockery, and but for a short time, and her heart was sad.

How she came to hear of the treasure that the queen my mistress had buried, I do not know. But she did hear of it, and wanted me to point out where it was. She knew that silver bedsteads, stools, cups, plates, and golden ornaments were all hidden somewhere, and I was importuned about it. But I would rather have been torn asunder by wild horses than betray my mistress's secret. All that she could say,

<sup>1</sup> Brijis Qadr was reputed to be the son of the king and Hazrat Mahal. After the outbreak of the Mutiny Brijis Qadr, then a boy about ten or twelve years old, was proclaimed viceroy of Oudh under the emperor, by the rebels. His mother acted as regent. After the capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell (March 1858) he and his mother escaped to Nepal. He returned to Calcutta after Wajid Ali Shah's death.

all that her attendants could say, would not drag the secret from me ; and seeing that she was getting angry about it, I left her service and fled to my native village. I found no rest there. I was a sheeah, an outcast, and I had no friends. At length, after much wandering, I returned to Lucknow, and the first news I heard from my husband, on finding him again, was that some one else had informed Brijis Kudr's mother where the treasure was, and she had found it. I went to the place by stealth, and found it even so. The cistern was dry, the bottom of it torn up, the secret chamber half filled with rubbish, and all the treasure gone.

Yes ! for two or three years after the mutiny we lived very well, I and my husband. We were well off. He was successful in business. But then everything went wrong, and I became a servant to English ladies. My mistress is very good, but I shall never get such a mistress as the queen again.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

NOWA ROZ,<sup>1</sup> or New Year's day, was a time of family reunion and feasting in the palace, as it is amongst poorer Mussulmans. I can remember, when a child at home, before I was carried off to Lucknow, that on New Year's day we got new dresses, and that we sprinkled each other with a red fluid made by boiling down the flower called *har singal*,<sup>2</sup> and that all the family met together for feasting and congratulations and giving of presents. The beginning of the New Year was considered a fit time, the fittest time, for mirth and fun and jollity.

Now it was exactly the same at the palace, only that, of course, everything was done in a more formal way; and everything was rich and splendid, not poor and dirty and squalid as in the villages.

The king always paid his mother, the queen my mistress, the compliment to come to her early on New Year's day, with Khash Mehal, his chief wife, and her son the heir apparent, to offer nuzzers or presents, and to wish her health, prosperity, and long life. On that day the queen put on her bravest apparel, and was loaded with jewellery. All her household took a pride in seeing her look her best, and wearing her richest clothing and ornaments; and throughout the year, it was often on New Year's day only that she would consent to be thus decked out.

When the king and Khash Mehal and the heir apparent had presented their gifts, then came a troop of the king's wives, a hundred or a hundred and twenty of them, whom the queen would not receive at other times. Some of them were mere children, many of them very pretty, some old, one was a negress, but all came trooping in in their best clothes, to the

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Harsingar*, *Nyctanthes arbor tristis*, a small shrub, from the flowers of which a yellow dye is obtained.

great amusement of the queen, who never looked upon them all without laughing.

Then came the general, with his eldest son and one or two of his wives ; but those whom he considered pretty, or whom he valued, the general never brought, lest his brother the king should see them and take them to himself. All came with gifts.

Great pitchers of red dye stood ready for use in the verandahs, and the queen sprinkled a little, a very little, on each, and was in turn sprinkled by them.<sup>1</sup> Sweetmeats were then handed round, and the morning's amusements wound up with the servants trooping into the courtyard, and plentifully daubing each other over with the dye, which was done with much mirth and laughter.

Fans, large and small, to be used by the hand, were prepared for this day, and were neatly trimmed with red cloth, and handed from one to the other, with a slight waving, as if to fan the party to whom each fan was offered.

Such were the morning's amusements—such, combined with music and dancing and singing, which were never wanting in the palace on occasions of mirth and festivity. But it was in the evening that the greatest hilarity prevailed. For two or three hours in the afternoon the queen usually lay down, fatigued with the morning's ceremony, but she never lay down without first reading prayers from the Koran, so zealous in religious matters was she.

The longest room in the palace was the scene of festivity in the evening, and in this preparation was made for the family banquet. New carpets were spread, and over them two long cloths from end to end, on each side of which plates were arranged. At right angles to this, across the top of the room, was another cloth, supported by a carpet of the richest material fringed with gold lace. The most splendid cushions were here made ready, and massive gold and silver articles displayed on all sides. At this shorter tablecloth, the seat of honour, at the upper end of the room, the queen my mistress, and the king, and Khash Mehal, and the heir apparent, and the

<sup>1</sup> This custom is an imitation of the Hindu celebrations at *Holi*, the spring festival.



general and his eldest son, took their places, amid the loud flourish of trumpets, the playing of bands, and the roar of cannon.

The chandeliers from the roof were all lit up, and the wall-shades by the sides of the large mirrors on the walls; the room was a blaze of light, and the sparkling of gold and silver cups, and plates, and jewellery, and rich dresses, reflected back by the large mirrors, made a gorgeous scene. It was as the court of Indra, the palace of the Peris. Then came the other wives of the king, trooping in, to take their places—some tall, some short, dark and fair, young and old, beautiful and ugly, all in rich kinkobs and cloths of gold, wearing their finest jewellery, and soft silvery voices rang forth in laughter, and the sweet tones of girlhood were mingled with the roar of drums and trumpets and all kinds of musical instruments without. The English are a great people, and do mighty wonders, but they have no assemblies like that so rich and gorgeous and splendid. Down the whole length of the room the chandeliers flashed upon rich garments and gems, and many beautiful faces, all reflected in the mirrors around; and as the music without ceased, and the banquet began, the hum of many voices rose from the long lines of sitting figures, subdued voices, and whispering intermingled with the soft laugh of girlhood, and happiness was over all.

And I, did I not see it? Was I not every year in the room? Who gave the queen her hookah, but I? and who could once see that beautiful scene, and fail to remember it for ever after?

When the banquet was concluded, music and singing and dancing filled up the hours till near midnight—no entertainment lasted over midnight. In that, as in so many other things, the feasts and festivals of the court were unlike the rejoicings and parties of the sahibs. Have I not seen the balls and parties of the English sahibs and ladies continue till the morning? It was never so at court.

Two years before annexation, the queen my mistress was not on good terms with the king her son. I do not know what was the cause of difference. Doubtless it was con-

nected with some affairs of state. I was but a slave who prepared the hookah : what could I know of it ? However, this I know, that on that occasion the king did not come as usual with Khash Mehal and his eldest son, the heir apparent, to pay the usual morning visit, with presents, and the queen was sad, but said nothing. In the evening all was as usual. The general, who loved the queen his mother, and was beloved by her, had come, as was the custom ; and on the next New Year's day the general came early to his mother's court to present his gifts, and to offer his congratulations, and stopped with her, not going, as was his wont, to visit the king also. The king noticed the absence of the general, and asked about it, and they told him, 'He is with the queen his mother.' The king waited for him to come all day, but finding he did not, and fearing that some family intrigue might be formed against him, for the English were daily threatening—so it is said, at least—he came towards evening to pay his usual visit to his mother.

The queen had been lying down, and when she heard he was come, she went and lay down again, and ordered her attendants to tell the king she was lying down as usual, and would not be disturbed. He waited some time, and then went away, and we hastened to tell the queen. On hearing this, she arose. But the king had only gone round, and entered her apartments by another way, and before any news could be brought, himself entered the room where she was, the female guards not daring to prevent him. 'Did you not tell me his majesty had gone ?' she asked of her attendants on seeing him, and for some time she refused to speak to him, or to receive his present. But at length she relented, and conversed amicably with him, and all was as usual, except that she would not recognize or acknowledge Khash Mehal at all.

On the last New Year's day before annexation, the king came with his eldest son so early that the queen was not ready to receive him, and he was kept waiting a short time. She certainly had great weight in the kingdom, and was highly esteemed both by the English resident and by the nobility for her virtue, prudence, and wisdom. Perhaps it was on this account the king strove so much not to offend her.

## CHAPTER VII

### MINOR RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND FASTS

THE fast of the Ramazan<sup>1</sup> was rigidly kept at the palace. For thirty days, sometimes in the hottest months of the year, nothing was allowed to be eaten or drunk from sunrise to sunset. Women who are in the family-way, and who are nursing, are exempted from this rigorous abstinence in the Koran, but no exceptions were made in the queen's court. Nor meat, nor drink, nor the hookah, was permitted for those thirty days, from sunrise to sunset. As soon as it was proclaimed from the minarets that the sun was down, the long day's fast was first broken by a pinch of salt, and then a long draught of water, or sherbet, or some cooling drink, previously prepared, was brought in and partaken of. Eating, drinking, and prayers filled up the night, for we all slept as much as possible in the day, to get over the long day's fast as pleasantly as possible.

On the first appearance of the moon after the fast of the Ramazan, the feast of the Ede<sup>2</sup> commenced. It is a day of joy and visiting of friends, and mutual congratulations. New clothes are worn and gifts are given and received. At the great musjid we had a grand service at nine o'clock in the morning on the Ede day, to which the queen always went, and returned home to partake plentifully and joyfully of the favourite dish of the season, *semay* (a kind of vermicelli),<sup>3</sup> which was boiled in milk, with dates, pistachio nuts, and spices to flavour it—an excellent dish when properly prepared. The queen always warned us on the morning of the Ede to abstain from angry words, disputes, and quarrelling during the whole of that day. On that day especially all should be peace and harmony and thankfulness. The children too got

<sup>1</sup> Ramzān is the ninth month of the Mohammedan year.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. *Id-ul fir*, 'the feast of breaking of the fast.'

<sup>3</sup> *Semai* (Hindi), a preparation of flour.

presents of toys on the Ede, and in the evening the gardens were lit up, and, with fruit and flowers and music and dancing and singing, the hardships of the Ramazan were forgotten.

The Bukra Ede (Ede of the goat),<sup>1</sup> celebrated some days after the Ede, is in remembrance of Abraham having been about to sacrifice his son Ishmael, when the angel stopped him, and threw down a goat from heaven for him to sacrifice instead. It was not his son Isaac he was going to sacrifice, but Ishmael—is it not all written in the Koran? Well, when the goat fell, it so happened that it fell on a fish and a locust, and killed them both; and hence a fish and a locust are the only two animals a good Mussulman can eat, without having them first killed by cutting their throats. The queen used to explain all these things to us, as we waited on her. She was learned as a moollah.

On the Bukra Ede every good Mussulman must eat the flesh of a goat, if he wishes to get into Paradise. The queen liberally supplied us with goat's flesh on the Bukra Ede, and besides that had two camels killed, so that every servant of the household might get a small portion of camel's flesh to eat. Those who sacrifice and eat camels on the Bukra Ede will enter Paradise riding on a camel, whilst other good and true believers will only enter it on a goat. Now, the advantage of riding the camel is, that from the trees of Paradise the riders on the camel can pluck the luscious fruit as they go along, whilst those riding on the goat cannot reach it. All this, and more of religious knowledge, did we learn from our good mistress the queen, who was learned and pious.

The Subrath<sup>2</sup> is a feast of woe, in honour of the dead. Flour, ghee or clarified butter, sugar, almonds, and raisins, are all made into a kind of paste, called *hudea*. When all is ready, and cakes of unleavened bread baked, a space is cleared for the ceremony, and a pan with fire in it placed in the midst. Five unleavened cakes are placed in the cleared space

<sup>1</sup> *Baqarāh Id*, 'the cow festival' held on the 10th Zil-Hijjah.

<sup>2</sup> *Shab-i-Baraat*, 'the night of record,' a feast held on the 15th of the month of Sha' Bān when a vigil is kept with prayers and illuminations.—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations* (ed. Crooke), p. 161.

round the fire. The family dead are then enumerated one by one, name by name, and as each name is mentioned a portion of the cake and of the hulwa is dropped into the fire, and good wishes for his condition in the future life are expressed. All the family dead for two generations back were thus named in the queen's household, but it is not right on these occasions to mention those who have died within two moons of the Subrath. If five or six moons have elapsed, then the names may be mentioned; and it being the first mention of them, a longer address is made use of, and more ceremony used in naming the name of the deceased. The ceremony is then concluded by pouring out forty jars of water. Forty is a sacred number, the queen explained to us—many events being recorded in the Koran with forty attached—forty days, forty years, forty prophets, forty stars, and such like. The rich add to this giving of alms to the poor, and in the doing of this our queen was very liberal, and we servants had our little advantages in it. Lastly lamps are lit upon the graves of the deceased, which makes the Subrath of the Mussulmans look like the Dewalee<sup>1</sup> of the Hindus. But they are very different. Are not the Hindus pagans and worshippers of idols and unbelievers?

<sup>1</sup> *Dīdīlī*, 'the feast of lights.' A popular Hindu festival which occurs in the month of Kartik (Sept.-Oct.), when illuminations are made in honour of deceased ancestors. The goddess Lakshmi (Fortune) is also worshipped, and games of chance are played in her honour.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOHURRIM

THE MOHURRIM is a time of mourning kept in remembrance of the deaths of Hassain and Hoossen,<sup>1</sup> the sons of Huzrut Aly.<sup>2</sup> The Soonnies only celebrate the Mohurrim for ten days, and they carry about no images or models. The Sheeahs celebrate the festival for forty days, with much parade, and images, and models, and some acting. During this fast, or festival of woe, no tobacco or pawn (betel-nut chewed with spices and lime) is used, and men and women are not to indulge in any sensual pleasures, but all ought to mourn and lament, with soul and body. The queen kept the Mohurrim so strictly, that she would not change her clothes those forty days, used no oil or sweet scents, put no *missee* (tooth-powder)<sup>3</sup> to her teeth, nor *mayndee* (colouring matter like rouge) to her hands or feet, and left off all her ornaments. No marriages ought to be celebrated or contracted during the Mohurrim, and in properly conducted households the men and women live separately at that time.

Every Mohurrim the queen instructed us diligently in the story of the deaths of Hassain and Hoossen, and I heard it all so often that I remember every word of it. The queen would tell it thus :

<sup>1</sup> The account here given of the deaths of Ali Husain and Hasan is so largely fictitious that it is useless to attempt to disentangle the historical facts upon which the tradition is based. 'But the whole sad tale becomes at this point so intensified and overlaid with Alyite fiction, that it is impossible to believe a hundredth part of what is related, and which the heated imaginations of the Shi'ites have invented.'—(Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 437 n.) See *Eastern King*, pp. 176, 183 notes.

<sup>2</sup> The term *Huzrat* is equivalent to our *Saint*. Noah and Abraham and Christ are always spoken of by Mussulmans as Huzrut Noah, &c. [W. K.]

<sup>3</sup> *Misei* or *misel*. a powder used for colouring the teeth.

Shortly after the time of the Prophet, whose name be always blessed, there were four brothers, leaders of the faithful, their names were Huzrut Aly, Yahudy, Zenabia Abas Alaam, and Zenabia Ameen Alaam. They disagreed amongst themselves on points of faith, too difficult for servants to understand; Abas Alaam sided with Huzrut Aly, who was the true follower of the Prophet, and Ameen Alaam sided with Yahudy, who was a father of error. The commander-in-chief of Huzrut Aly's forces was Syud Salár, who, after a little, deserted, with all his forces, to Yahudy, and a civil war began. Cursed be those that breed dissension amongst the faithful! In the course of the war Yahudy, whose name and memory be for ever defiled, bribed one of the bodyguard of Huzrut Aly to cut off his chief's head, and the bribe was his daughter in marriage, the betrothed of Hassain, son of Huzrut Aly. This girl was beautiful as a houri, and the bribe was more than enough to corrupt even a good man. But so attached and devoted were the few followers of the saint, that the one who was faithless waited long in vain for an opportunity to execute his wicked purpose, born of the devil. The army of Yahudy was large, and Huzrut Aly, with only a few followers, was shut up, besieged, and in want of all things—water and provisions and ammunition.

At length the day of the martyrdom of the saint dawned. As he was on his way to the musjid for morning prayers, according to his wont, a goose caught hold of his robe, and would have prevented his going. He laughed only, and said 'I know my enemy is waiting for me.' A little further on, a goat would have impeded him, but he gave the same answer, and went on his way. From that day the goose and the goat are animals esteemed by all good Sheeahs as sacred. As the saint entered the musjid, the traitor, who had been bribed, was standing behind the door hidden, and lifted his sword unseen of all but God and the saint. 'Strike,' said the saint, 'I fear not.' The weapon fell from the hand of the traitor, and the saint passed on. But the devil gives strength to his own, and the traitor watched the saint, and when he was bowing his head in earnest prayer, the traitor—may curses light

on him and all his posterity!—cut off the saint's head with one blow, and escaped.<sup>1</sup> The two sons of the saint, Hassain and Hoossen, aided by God, carried on the war. And now the camp of the faithful was suffering dreadfully from want of water. One of the four daughters of Huzrut Aly was in the camp, beautiful as a peri, and she too was in torture for want of water. Her uncle Abas Alaam loved her, saw her sufferings, and, taking a skin for water, cut his way through the enemy to a well, and filled the skin with water, though exposed to the fire of an army. As he was carrying off the skin full of water, he was wounded in the shoulder, and his arm was disabled, and the skin of water fell to the ground. He seized it then with his teeth, and was wounded again as he carried it along. The enemy fired their arrows at the skin to let the water out, and when he arrived where his niece was, there was but enough to quench her thirst, and he laid down and died.

In the meantime the body of Huzrut Aly lay for a whole month undecayed in the musjid, which was at a considerable distance from the quarters of the faithful. Hassain and Hoossen determined to set out to bring in their father's body. All their female relations dissuaded them with many tears, saying, 'You too will be killed;' but they felt no fear, and prepared their horses, and a mule to carry the body, and set out fully armed. Arrived at the musjid, they found a tiger guarding the body. They lifted the corpse, put it on the mule's back, and no sooner got outside the musjid, than they were furiously attacked. Holding the string of the led mule, they fought their way back, but the string was cut, and the mule went off with the body, and they fainting and wounded got back alive.

<sup>1</sup> Ali was assassinated by Ibn Muljam, a Kharijite fanatic, in the mosque at Kufa in Ramzân A.D. 661. The assassin was seized and executed. This was nineteen years before the tragedy at Korbala. The story that Ibn Muljam was bribed by Mûâiwiya (Yahudy †), Ali's rival, who ruled as Caliph at Damascus, is baseless. The Kharijite conspirators intended his death also; he was wounded in the mosque at Damascus on the same Friday of Ramzân, but recovered.—Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, ch. 45.



Soon after in a great battle the forces of the faithful were routed by the enemy, on whose heads be shame ; and the two sons and the brother of Huzrut Aly were killed in the fight. Notice was brought to Lady Fatima, the widow of the saint, and she and her four daughters, weeping and barefooted, throwing ashes on their heads, went forth to seek for the dead. After long search in vain, they took refuge, tired and weary, in a tent.

And now behold the perfidy of slaves ! Whoso trusteth in a slave will be certain to be betrayed, and the Prophet saith likewise. A slave of the saint saw them there, and, anxious to gain the favour of Yahudy, tore their veils from them, and turned them out of the tent with blows, and thus, with exposed faces, and barefooted, went forth the weeping widow and daughters of the saint, with none to help them—a piteous case !

Weeping and lamenting, they wandered forth on the battle-field, and their great enemy Yahudy saw them, recognized them, and, smiling, left them to their fate. Hard as adamant the heart of the wicked ! But faithless as slaves are and will be, yet now a slave befriended them ; showing that, even amongst the worst of mankind, there are some good. This slave conducted them to a forest, where they might lie concealed, and Fatima spun, and her daughters ground corn, and thus they supported themselves, in retirement, ungazed upon by man. They had no veils, but Fatima and her daughters collected in the forest 180 pieces of rags, and, having washed them, made a sheet for a veil, which they wore in turn when they went out. Perseverance and trust in God will overcome all evils.

Things continued thus for a month or so, when a wicked band of the enemy, children of the devil, found them out, and murdered them all without pity, mercy, or remorse.

Such was the story of Hassain and Hoossen, as the queen told it to us, weeping as she told it, and we never heard it without loud lamentations and beating of breasts, and tears. A representation of the tomb of the martyrs, called the *tazia*, is carried in procession at the end of the Mohurrim, and buried.

In the palace, tazias of rich materials were always kept in some of the largest apartments, and carried about in procession at the Mohurrim. During the lifetime of Umjid Aly Shah there were only two of these tazias of silver, each with its silver altar before it; but in the reign of Wajid Aly there were nine of them, and they were kept in the silver *baradhurry*<sup>1</sup> in the palace. The silver altars were covered with a black cloth, at the time of the Mohurrim, and on these altars votive offerings called *alams*,<sup>2</sup> silver hands in shape, and daggers and swords and such-like, were displayed to view.

On the floor between the tazias curiously shaped coloured lanterns were placed, with scented wax candles in them, which were lit at night. During the entire forty days the *baradhurry* was brilliantly illuminated every night, but on the ninth night the light was as that of day.

On the seventh day a procession took place in honour of Kassim, the cousin of Hassain, who lost his life on his wedding-day, and trays of silver covered with the leaves of the mayndee are carried about then from house to house, with weeping and lamentation. The mayndee yields the red dye and paint so much used in marriage feasts and processions, and hence the trays of mayndee carried about in memory of Kassim's untimely death.

On the eighth day ceremonies are performed in honour of Abas Alaam, who so bravely brought the water for his favourite niece.

But the ninth is the great day of the fast. In the mosques there is then a continuous reading of the Koran all day long, kept up by successive relays of moollahs, and the lives and deaths of Huzrut Aly and his martyred family are related; and on that night the illumination in the palace and the

<sup>1</sup> *Bārahdari*, 'room with twelve doors'—large reception-room.

<sup>2</sup> *Alam*, banner. 'In front of the *taziyas* and of the flying horses were a number of standards; some intended to be facsimiles of the banner ('*alam*') of Hussein: and others having the names of particular martyrs.' The banners of Ali were denominated, 'The Palm of the Hand of Ali the Elect;' 'The Hand of the Lion of God;' 'The Palm of the Displayers of Wonders;' and 'The Palm of the Dispenser of Difficulties'—Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings*, ii, 18.

bazaars and the city was as if all the stars of heaven had come down into Lucknow. The tazias were carried about in procession, and a horse—the horse of Hassain, called Dhool-dhool—all stuck over with arrows, followed the tazias, and the weeping women, with loud lamentations and beating of breasts, followed, and the multitude took up the wail, and the city mourned.

In the queen's household we had recitations all night on that ninth night; for the queen was devout. None slept. The martyrdom of Huzrut Aly and his family was described again and again, and prints of the chief scenes in the saint's life were exhibited, and we all wept and wailed all night long. I remember particularly the pictures of Fatima and her daughters, without veils and bare-footed, the hut in the forest, and the spinning-wheel, and the sheet of the 180 rags, and last of all the horrid murder. Oh! it was a sad sight. Three times during the night a solemn farewell to the dead brothers was spoken, the last farewell just as day dawned.

On the morning of the day when all the tazias, except the silver ones, were buried, they were ranged in one of the courtyards of the palace, and three hundred men, reciters of the woes of the saint's martyrdom, and the martyrdom of his family, were engaged, and other men rattled together bits of wood as the people lamented. The men and women struck their breasts at intervals, shouting 'Hassain' and 'Hoossen!' and it was no uncommon thing for blood to flow from this striking of the breasts, and serious injury to be done. On the conclusion of the recitation, the queen my mistress and the king and all the royal family walked in procession round the tazias, three times. They then threw dust and chopped-up straw into the air, in imitation of the ashes Fatima and her daughters had strewn on their heads, and then all of them uncovered their heads, and beat their breasts, shouting 'Hassain! Hoossen!' just as the servants and the multitude did. The farewell benediction was always spoken first by the queen my mistress, and afterwards by the king.

This done, the procession for the burial of the tazias was formed. Bearers of alums or votive offerings first, then

readers and reciters, then mourners, then more alum-bearers, and so on, till the tazias themselves came; the readers and reciters and mourners with each. The tazias were usually composed of a framework of wood, covered with silk, and the sides of talc or glass—all of the shape of the tomb, decorated with flags and such like, of brilliant colours, with tinsel representations of the water-skin of Abas Alaam, the spinning-wheel of Fatima, and other memorable objects connected with this mournful history.

When the procession had gone ahead some forty yards or so, the royal family followed with uncovered heads—my mistress first. Again they all beat their breasts, and cried 'Hassain! Hoossen!' and lamented. They went so far about half a mile of enclosed walks, not in the public roads, and then returned, in their conveyance, to spend the day in reading, and praying, and in religious exercises. At least, so the queen spent it. No one was allowed to eat a morsel of food, or to drink a drop of water, all that day, till the procession returned from the burial of the tazias, which was about sunset. Even the sucking infant on that day was deprived of its food till the burial was over, so strict was the fast.

But rigorous as the fast really is, it is not called a fast, and two or three grains of salt are put on the tongue in the morning, to prevent its being a fast, because it is said that the wife of the traitor who slew Huzrut Aly fasted for joy at the success of her husband's treason. May her tomb be defiled!

During the first five days of the Mohurrim, meat and drink were distributed to the poor, and on the sixth and seventh days large quantities of excellent and savoury dishes were given away—kabobs, and pillaus, and khoormas. On the eighth day the breakfast of Abas Alaam is offered, but only those who are pure in mind and body, having bathed and put on clean clothes, dare to partake of it. Even mentioning his name with unwashed mouth is a sin which has been severely punished. On the afternoon of the eighth day sherbet is given to the poor in memory of Hassain, and on the ninth day they get a preparation of rice and milk, boiled together, and called *khere*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Khe*.

The temple of Abas Alaam<sup>1</sup> is crowded with suppliants during the first ten days of the Mohurrim. He is supposed to be beneficent to all who worship in sincerity and purity. He grants cures of diseases, children, and release from trouble and sorrow. If any particular object be prayed for, such as a child, a figure of it is offered. The figure first offered is of little or no value, but if the gift is granted, then a figure of silver is given. These offerings are made during the Mohurrim, and after it is over the priests take what they require for themselves, and dispose of the rest for the benefit of the poor.

I know of many who got children by prayers to Abas Alaam. The queen's daughter, whose marriage was not a happy one, had been married some years without children. She made a votive offering of a boy in silver, and before next Mohurrim she had a son. No, he is not alive now. He died eighteen months after. She is childless now. Such is fate.

The last Mohurrim, before the English rule, was in 1855, and everyone that was there must remember how many signs there were of coming misfortune. The horse of Huzrut Aly, called Dhool-dhool, which comes in apparently stuck with arrows, when introduced into the baradhurry to go seven times round the tazias, destroyed the carpet. This was one omen. Again, two of the chandeliers in the palace fell, with a great crash, on the ninth day, and all of us said to ourselves and to each other, 'What does this portend?' Was not that another bad omen? And one of the tazias took fire, and was burned up. Was not that another bad omen? Last of all, a great comet appeared in the sky, the point of which was turned towards Oudh, and the tail towards Mecca, and the wise knew that it was for the rising and falling of kingdoms.

It was the custom of the king, Wajid Aly, to have two figures made during the Mohurrim—one of Yahudy, and one of Syud Salár; and he had the faces of the figures blackened, and a chain of old shoes hung round their necks in contempt, and two *mehlers*, or sweepers (men of the lowest caste), stood on each side with their sweeping brooms in their hands instead of the usual handsome attendants with chowries to brush

<sup>1</sup> The Dargah. See *Eastern King*, p. 145.

away the files. And the king shot at these figures with arrows, and struck them with a sword, and exposed them to every indignity, decent and indecent, and his companions did the same when the king was tired ; and last of all the two figures were burnt with fire, and their ashes were scattered to the winds of heaven. It was thus that the king displayed his zeal for the faith ; but God was not pleased with him, or surely he would never have lost his kingdom. So said the queen my mistress often, and she was wise.

## CHAPTER IX

### LADY FATIMA

It was some time, perhaps three or four years, before the English annexation, when the queen had been annoyed and inconvenienced by exhibitions of pride and want of attention on the part of some of her chief attendants, that she called her female household together, and related to them the story of Huzrut Fatima. I heard it several times afterwards, and it is all fixed in my memory, so that I can tell it nearly word for word :

Lady Fatima was wife of Huzrut Aly, and mother of Hassain and Hoossen ; and whilst she and her husband lived happily and in great splendour together, a poor grass-cutter and his wife lived at no great distance from their palace. Now, the Lady Fatima was proud and did not wait upon and tend her husband with all that assiduity that a wife ought : this was her only fault.

One day Huzrut Aly said to her, 'Beebee Fatima, that poor grass-cutter's wife will enter heaven before you.' 'Before me ?' said the Lady Fatima haughtily. 'How can that be, when I am the wife of a prophet ?' And the saint answered, 'Nevertheless, what I say is true ; for she will hold the bridle of the camel on which you enter Paradise, and set her foot in it before you.' 'And why should that be so ?' asked the lady. 'See her, and judge for yourself,' was the saint's answer.

So the next morning the Lady Fatima went herself to the grass-cutter's cottage, and knocked at the door. 'Who's there ?' asked the grass-cutter's wife from within. 'It is I, Huzrut Beebee Fatima,' was the lady's answer. 'And what is it you require, lady ?' asked the poor woman, still from within. 'I want to enter and see you and your cottage,' said the lady. 'I have not enquired my husband's wishes in this matter,' said the poor woman. 'He is at his daily work :

I cannot open the door now ; when he returns I will ask him, and to-morrow I will tell you what he says.' Lady Fatima returned home and told Huzrut Aly all that had taken place. His reply was, 'Persevere, see, and judge.'

Next morning Lady Fatima went out walking with her son Hassain, and called at the grass-cutter's cottage again. She knocked at the door ; the same question was asked by the poor woman from within, 'Who's there ?' and the same answer was returned, 'It is I, Huzrut Beebee Fatima.' Just then Hassain, her son, said something ; and as the grass-cutter's wife was coming to the door to open it, she heard his voice. 'Is there anyone with you, Lady Fatima ?' she asked from within. 'Only my son Hassain,' was the answer. 'I had my husband's permission to open the door for you,' said the poor woman ; 'but I did not ask him anything about your son. I cannot open for him also.' So the Lady Fatima returned home, saying she would come again next day. And when she told her husband Huzrut Aly what had taken place, he said again, 'Persevere, see, and judge.'

So the next day the Lady Fatima was walking out with her two sons, Hassain and Hoossen, and went to the cottage as before, and the same dialogue took place ; but when the poor woman saw that the Lady Fatima had her two sons with her, she would not open, saying that she had only permission from her husband to open to the Lady Fatima and her son Hassain ; but she would ask her husband, on his return, if the Lady Fatima chose to come again. So the Lady Fatima returned home, and told her husband Huzrut Aly what had taken place, and got the same answer, 'Persevere, see, and judge.'

On the grass-cutter coming home in the evening, his wife told him what she had done, and, instead of commending her for it, he exclaimed, 'O miserable woman ! do you want to ruin me by sending away a lady such as Huzrut Beebee Fatima day by day from my door ? If it is her good pleasure to come again, throw open the door, whoever may be with her, and admit her without an instant's delay.'

So next day, when Lady Fatima and her two sons came to the cottage, the poor woman threw open the door, and



invited them to enter, before the lady had time to knock. Lady Fatima entered, seated herself, and looked around her. She observed that everything in the cottage was poor; but everything was tidy, neat, and clean. A small fire burned on the floor, and an iron plate, or griddle, was standing by it, ready to bake the thin unleavened bread used by the poor, called *chupatties*, and a vessel of pease was also near. In another place cold food and well-filtered water stood ready. There were two beds ready, one with a pillow and thick counterpane, the other simply a framework covered with tape. A rope was hanging up on the wall, and a cane stood in the corner.

'Tell me, my good woman,' said the lady, 'what are all these things for?' 'All for my husband's comfort, when he returns home tired and weary,' said the woman. 'If he wishes to sleep, here is his bed ready; if he only wishes to rest himself the other bed, covered with that broad tape, is ready. Warm and cold water are ready for him to wash, and, as to food, cold food is ready in one corner, and he can have warm *chupatties* and *dhall* in a few minutes. Behold also his *hookah* ready.' 'And what,' asked the lady, 'is the meaning of this rope and cane?' 'These too,' said the woman, 'are for my husband's comfort and convenience. Should he find cause to be displeased with me, the rope is ready with which he can tie me up, and the cane is ready with which to beat me, without the trouble of searching for them!'

Lady Fatima said nothing in reply, but thought much and went on her way home.

That same evening Huzrut Aly returned to his apartment, looking flushed and weary, for the day was hot. Lady Fatima took a fan up at once, and began fanning him. They had been married many years, yet she had never done this before, so he saw that the lesson he had wished to teach had been learned by her. He was very glad, so glad that his heart began to swell with gratitude to God to such an extent that his whole body was inflamed, and his vest became so tight it threatened to choke him at the neck. The Almighty saw the danger that threatened his friend the prophet, and, calling the angel

Gabriel, said, 'Go down forthwith to Huzrut Aly, and say to him from me, "The Almighty wants payment of all the debt due by you."' And in an instant of time the angel Gabriel delivered the message, and the heart, before swollen so large, became small, and the vest slipped down, buttoned as it was.

From that day Huzrut Beebee Fatima became the most devoted of wives, and put away from her all pride, and performed her duties diligently without affectation or neglect, and was beloved of God and her husband.

Such is the story of the Lady Fatima, as the queen told it to us.

## CHAPTER X

### PREJUDICES AND SUPERSTITIONS

WISE and good as the queen was, death was a subject which she would not allow to be mentioned, or even alluded to, in her presence. The word *death* was banished altogether from ordinary conversation in her household, and even its equivalents, to be taken away, to depart this life, and such like, were not used. The periphrasis by which the idea was usually conveyed, was that the responsibility of the child was off the parents' shoulders, meaning that the child was dead; or the responsibility of the wife off the husband's shoulders, meaning that the wife was dead, and so on.

The queen's father or mother, I do not know which, had died whilst apparently in a sound sleep, and this had made such an impression upon her mind when a girl, that she always begged her attendants never to let her go into a very sound sleep, but to wake her up if she seemed to sleep more than ordinarily soundly. This the attendants always promised to do, but never did.

Her youngest son was about ten years of age when her husband, Umjid Aly Shah, died, and was a great favourite both with his father and mother. I remember, on one occasion, a large quantity of gold mohurs had been brought in by the queen's treasurer, and, having been counted, were arranged in little piles of ten each on the carpet in front of her. I was but a child, and the thought was in my mind that I had never seen such piles of gold before in all my life. The youngest son of the queen and his nurse came in just then, and as he was about my own age, or a little younger, I looked upon him with great interest. By and by there was a great disturbance. Some of the gold pieces were missing, and servants were suspected, and search was made, and all were in terror of flogging to extort confession. For two or three days the investigation and search about the missing gold went on, and both were unsuccessful—nothing was found.

At length the young prince himself told his mother he had taken some of the gold to give to his foster-mother, and that he had concealed it about his person before leaving the room. As many of the servants had been suspected, and so much trouble had been taken to find the culprit, the queen was very angry that her son had not told her before. So she had him tied hand and foot, after the manner of criminals, and taken into the king's presence to be judged and punished.

The king was at durbar when his son was brought to him thus ; and on seeing the young prince, his favourite son, tied up, he was very angry, and ordered him to be released forthwith. He was very near punishing the servants who brought him in thus ignominiously, although they pleaded the queen's orders. However, finally, he released them with threats, and took the young prince and fondled him, and made him presents of gold and jewels.

The queen was not pleased at all this, and rated the king soundly when he next came to her apartment, and would not see the young prince for three days, as a punishment ; but further punishment than that she did not or dared not inflict.

The queen was a believer in dreams, and no wonder. Do not thousands of dreams come true ? A few months after the death of Umjid Aly Shah, the young prince, who had been very fond of his father, woke up one night crying, and said his father had called him three times. And the queen asked him, and the boy said, 'My father came to me and called to me three times thus, and beckoned : I want to go to him.' The young prince slept again ; but the queen was very uneasy, and lay awake till morning. That morning the young prince got up apparently quite well, but towards midday he sickened—cholera came on—and he was dead before evening ! Yet people often say there is nothing in dreams !

It was not more than a year or so before the annexation of Oudh to the British territories in India, that the queen dreamt one night that an old man of venerable aspect had come to the king's durbar, and, taking the king her son by the hand, had lifted him off the royal carpet, leaving him to stand upon the floor beyond. As none in the household could

interpret this dream, the soothsayers of Lucknow were collected, and, after much consultation, they decided that some serious injury threatened the kingdom, and they showed how it was to be averted by prayers, and gifts, and such like. But the means they showed to avert the danger failed, and was not the annexation of Oudh by the English the fulfilment of the queen's dream? Yet the impious laugh at dreams!

It was a tradition in the palace that women had been walled up, in more places than one, for infidelity, and other crimes, by the various kings; and the queen had certain knowledge of two or three such cases that had occurred in former reigns. The queen therefore did not like walking about the corridors or passages, after dark, and always had a good light in her own room. I have heard the queen say that more than once shrieks from the built-up walls had reached her ears, whether of the women themselves or of their spirits she did not know; and, so far as she could make out, they called for food, for water, for life. I was but a child, and often I had to go alone at night through these passages; and I went fearfully, my flesh creeping, my heart beating aloud, and every limb trembling—so much so that I could hardly walk.

After her widowhood the queen never occupied a state bed again, but simply couches of wood with little ornament. She always lay too on her right side, and her attendants said it was a penance she imposed on herself, in memory of her deceased husband.

So short had been the reigns of the two or three former kings of Oudh, that there was a rumour in Lucknow that a snake lay hidden in the throne, and that its poison soon ended the sovereign's life. Hence, when the queen's son Wajid Aly was crowned, he would not sit upon the *guddee*,<sup>1</sup> or cushion, as his fathers had done, but simply touched the *guddee* seven times bowing, and then sat himself apart from it. And certain it is, that whilst his father and grandfather reigned only three or four years each, he reigned nine or ten years,

<sup>1</sup> *Gaddi*.

and had many sons<sup>1</sup> whilst king. The throne in Lucknow was said to be the very one on which King Solomon, the wisest of men, had sat. It was taken to pieces by the English. Although the wisest of men had sat on that throne, all were not wise that sat on it. Wajid Aly had many wives, and so had Solomon. It is written in the Koran that Solomon had many wives, and he was the wisest of men, and it was God himself gave him his wisdom. Mashallah ! God's will be done !

<sup>1</sup> The *Tarikh-i-Awadh* gives a list of forty-five sons and thirty-four daughters of Wajid Ali Shah.

## CHAPTER XI

### BORN IN THE PURPLE

On the occasion of a birth in the royal harem, notice was sent to all the relatives of the father in the first place. None but female assistance and attendance were allowed, and the skill of these female attendants was proverbial. Drinks of hot milk, and food consisting of rice and pease flavoured with ginger and cloves, were the nourishment usually given in the first instance to the mother. If the infant was a son, cannon were fired,<sup>1</sup> and fireworks let off at night with lavish profusion. If a daughter, the rejoicings were of a much milder and less boisterous character. For boys a wet-nurse was engaged for two years and a quarter, and for girls for one year and three-quarters, the mothers of the royal household never nursing their own children. Besides the wet-nurse, another woman was engaged whose sole duty it was to look after the wet-nurse, to see that she did not eat things likely to be injurious to her, and that she lived a strictly chaste and temperate life. This attendant was expected to be with the nurse night and day.<sup>2</sup>

On the ninth day after the birth the mother was bathed and dressed in new clothes. Her friends were then first

<sup>1</sup> 'The birth of a son is immediately announced by a discharge of artillery, where cannon are kept; or by musketry in the lower grades of the native population, even to the meanest peasant with whom a single matchlock proclaims the honour as effectually as the volley of his superiors.'—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> 'Amongst the better sort of people the mother very rarely nourishes her own infant. The great objection is, that in Mussulman families nurses are required to be abstemious in their diet, by no means an object of choice amongst so luxurious a people. A nurse is not allowed for the first month or more to taste animal food, and even during the two years—the usual period of supporting infancy by this nourishment—the nurse lives by rule both in quality and quantity of such food as may be deemed essential to the well-being of the child.'—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, p. 211.

permitted to call upon her and offer their congratulations, and it was usual for her own relatives to forward gifts of large quantities of all kinds of food to the palace; the gifts of money and ornaments intended for the nurse were usually thrown into the bath-tub, on the occasion of the newly-born infant being first bathed—the father setting the example. After that first bath the infant was daily rubbed with oil, but was not again bathed for a whole year. The mother was similarly rubbed and shampooed with oil. Whether she were wife by *nikha* or *muda*—that is, by the most formal, or only by left-handed marriage—on the birth of a son she took rank at once after the duly betrothed and dowried wife. Her establishment was placed at once upon a more respectable footing, and she herself became a power in the state. But the giving birth to a daughter did not confer these advantages.

The mother on these occasions did not leave her room for forty days, and the mother of a son had then the liberty of roaming about in the palace, pretty much as she pleased, although her doing so previously would be highly indecorous—in fact, would not be permitted. The presents usually sent to the mother and child by the king were a cradle and playthings of silver, and ornaments for the wrists and ankles. The establishment with which a mother of a son was endowed comprised an annual payment from the treasury, larger or smaller in proportion to the favour in which she was held, but never to my knowledge less than 12,000 rupees a year (£1,200). Handsome jewels and clothes were sent to her. She was dressed as *mullka*, or queen. Guards, attendants, slaves, were appointed for her, and she became at once the mistress of a household.

The name of the infant was usually chosen from the Koran, which was opened by the father or the moollah, as chance or fate decided, and the first word, or the first proper name, decided the matter. The moollah was often bribed to give a particular name, and then he made it appear that fate had decided it. Ill luck that, both for parent and child. Such a boy but too often sits heavily on the head of



his father. Of course, there are good and bad moollahs, as there are good and bad men of all classes ; but they ought to be the best of all men.

If the divination by opening the Koran fortuitously makes it appear that the son will be an injury to the father, the father is then forbidden to look upon it for one, two, or three months, as the case may be, to obviate the evil omen. The first bath of the mother is regulated as to the hour, and sometimes as to the day, by the divination from the Koran.

The apartment in which the birth has taken place is held to be unclean for forty days. On the fortieth day it is thoroughly cleaned out, a chapter of the Koran read, and the woman is then permitted to join, for the first time since her confinement, in religious exercises.

The second son of the queen my mistress, usually called the general, who accompanied her to England and died there,<sup>1</sup> was very dutiful to the queen, and both of them were fond of each other. One of his wives was the daughter of the vizier or prime minister, and to this wife he was not at all attached. In fact she seemed to be an object of aversion to him. The queen's only daughter was also married to the vizier's eldest son,<sup>2</sup> and he retaliated the general's neglect of his sister upon his own wife, who was the general's sister. All this was the source of great trouble in the palace, and of much anxiety to the queen my mistress. Constant mediations were necessary on both sides, and it was not without the most earnest appeals on the queen's part that either of these husbands could be got to visit or live with these despised wives.

On one occasion, some five or six years before annexation, the general, in travelling, accidentally saw the two daughters of a poor Rajpoot (a Hindu). They were twelve and fourteen

<sup>1</sup> Mirza Sikandar Hashmat did not die in Europe: he returned to Calcutta after his mother's death.

<sup>2</sup> This is incorrect. The queen's daughter was married to Sarfaraz-d-daulah, son of Munir-d-daulah. Munir-d-daulah never held the office of wazir, as far as I can discover.

years of age respectively, and the general fell in love with them both. The queen saw them, and although they were Hindus, yet for the love she bore her son she consented to his marrying one of them. He took them both and married them. In course of time the eldest gave birth to a very beautiful boy, now with the ex-king at Calcutta, one of the handsomest children ever born in the palace. From the time that these two sisters had become the wives of the general, they had been dressed and educated as Mohammedans—the dress consisting of wide *pyjamas*, or drawers, each leg three or four yards wide, an inner close-fitting vest, and a muslin sheet or veil, thrown over the head, and voluminous enough to envelop the entire figure if necessary. In adopting this dress, and in listening to and repeating the prayers from the Koran, the two sisters were regarded as having thrown away their pagan faith, Hinduism, and embraced the faith of the true believers.

In the midst of the joy at the birth of this son in the general's palace, the young mother began to long for a visit from her own mother, a poor Rajpoot woman. The general sent rich presents to the poor woman, and, having had her clothed in fine raiment, permitted her to come and visit her daughter. But the daughter was not content with this. The spirit of obstinacy was in her, and she insisted on her mother stopping with her altogether. This the general, as a good Mussulman, could not and would not permit. The young mother had set her heart upon this and upon nothing else. No rich presents nor jewels and ornaments, no, nor her own lovely son, could console her. She longed and pined and fretted herself to death. She died on the ninth day, and the general was inconsolable.

The queen loved her son the general, and was grieved at his distress. She sent through Lucknow and the provinces to try and get another beauty, Mussulman or Hindoo, equal to her he had lost. Many were brought, and the queen did her best to set off their attractions, and divert her son's mind from its sorrow, but all in vain. He would not be comforted.

Wearied at length with his obstinate grief, she spoke thus to him one day that I was preparing the hookah for her, and he had come on a visit : ' What am I to do for you, unreasonable man ? Will nothing console you ? ' And he answered, ' If you could call her back from the tomb, that would console me ; but you cannot.' ' Then why did you let her pine and die ? ' asked the queen. ' When she was alive, was she not all your own ? Why not have allowed her mother to live with her ? ' ' Did I not let her mother visit her ? ' he asked. ' Could I do more ? Am I not a Mus-sulman ? '

Thus they spoke, after that, many times. However, he consoled himself, a year or so after, with another wife, and was happy.

I saw the son of that Rajpoot girl in Lucknow, a prisoner in the hands of the English after the Mutiny. The English officer was kind, and did not want to hurt the boy, and sent him to the daughter of the vizier, the general's wife, that wife whom he had neglected so much. She would not receive the youth, but returned him to the English officer, reviling the boy as half a Hindu and half a Christian, and saying that she had nothing to do with him, and could not let a child like that—and she called him an opprobrious name—live with her. After some delay and much correspondence, the boy was finally sent down to Calcutta, and is now with the ex-king, as I have said.

On the occasion of a birth in the palace, particular care was taken to prevent evil spirits doing any harm. For six days after the infant's birth a fire and a light were kept in the room constantly. The evil spirits are driven away by fires and by lights—are they not spirits of darkness, and of the Evil One ? But if human eyes are kept fixed on the little one, the evil spirits have no power over it. Hence a mother should never turn her back upon her child for six days at least.

After I left the palace, during the time of the wars, I was visiting a poor friend. A boy had just been born to her, and she had no proper assistance, and was wearied watch-

ing her little one, for fear of the spirits. So I took it from her, and told her to sleep, and she did so. I had travelled a good deal that day, and my eyes were heavy. However, determined to watch the little one, I sat on a low stool before a small fire, with my back to the wall, and the infant in my lap. After midnight, in spite of myself, I dozed, and, after a time, I heard a rushing footstep beating hard on the earthen floor, and I roused myself, and found the infant had been taken from my lap by the evil spirit, and was lying on the floor quite dead. The spirits take the life only, not the body. The child's neck was broken in the struggle. And you ask how I know it was an evil spirit did it. How do I know that I am alive now, and was alive then? Would God or a good spirit do it? No; the child could not have fallen from my lap, and broken its neck upon the hard unmatted ground. Besides, did I not hear the rushing footstep beating hard upon the earthen floor? O full of unbelief!—forgive me, my lord, but we in Oudh know more of these evil spirits, and what they can do, than you sahibs from England appear to know. Did I not hear the footstep? Why then talk of falling from my arms? Wah! wah! but the world is as full of unbelief as the sun is of light. But God is good and great, and the evil spirits are very wicked.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOLY MATRIMONY

THE marriages in the court were of two kinds—*nikha* and *mula*. The former was the complete and perfect ceremony between equals; the latter usually between a superior and inferior, and not considered so binding as the *nikha*. In the royal family the boys were usually betrothed at the age of from ten to sixteen years. It was unusual to find a boy betrothed under ten years of age, and it would not have been easy to find a boy of sixteen who was not betrothed. The girls were usually betrothed when two years younger than the boys.

Presents of flowers and fruit usually passed between the betrothed until the time of marriage; and for a month before marriage the bride was fed exclusively upon milk, unleavened bread, and sweetmeats. Two days before the marriage both bride and bridegroom rubbed *mayndee*, a red dye, on the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, and the way in which the *mayndee* adhered was considered emblematical of the lasting character of the affection between the two, and the happiness of the match. It was also usual for the bridegroom to send a suit of yellow clothing to the bride as emblematical of love.

In the royal household all matters appertaining to dowry and suchlike were settled long before the marriage ceremony took place. But in the households of poorer Mussulmans it is not at all unusual for violent altercations on this subject to break out even when the marriage procession is being formed.

The marriage procession was usually a time of great mirth and festivity at court. Elephants with silver howdahs, splendid palanquins, and highly ornamented chairs of state borne by servants in liveries of scarlet and gold lace, bands of music, richly caparisoned horses, bearers of silver sticks (called *chobdars*) and other bearers richly dressed, with

trays of presents and sweetmeats of all kinds—all these, and crowds of thousands of citizens, formed a scene, when brilliantly lit up by torchlight, like that of the court of Indra and the Palace of the Peris.

This marriage procession, called the *barrath*,<sup>1</sup> goes at night to conduct the bride to the house of the bridegroom. It usually started from the palace about eight or nine o'clock, and concluded about midnight. However near the houses might be to each other, the time consumed was the same, the procession going by a circuit when the houses were near, to lengthen out the ceremony. So with cannons firing, and fireworks blazing away, and torches flashing, so that night was turned into day, it stood before the door, awaiting the bride, whom the bridegroom had not yet seen. Nor did he see her till the ceremony was concluded.

The marriage ceremony—the *nikha*—is almost entirely religious. The parents answer for the girl, and the bridegroom engages to take her, to love her, to cherish her for ever, whether she be lovely and young, or old and blind and decrepit; whether black and ugly, or fair and handsome. The bridegroom gives the nose-ring to the bride as the sign of marriage, but in the court a ring for the finger and a garland for the head were usually added.

At the close of the religious ceremony a muslin veil was thrown over the heads of both, and a mirror laid between them, in which the bridegroom, for the first time, saw the face of his bride. It was not difficult to judge, from the countenance of the youth when the veil was removed, whether he was pleased or disappointed. The bride was usually conducted to her own home again, that is, to the house of her father and mother, the following day, and lived with them a month or so, the bridegroom visiting her occasionally or regularly every day, remaining during the night and departing in the morning, according to his pleasure. From the devotion he exhibited during this first month, or

<sup>1</sup> *Bārāt*; v. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, p. 197 *passim*; also Mrs. Park's account of the marriage of Mirza Unjun Shekhu with Colonel Gardner's daughter, *Wanderings, etc.*, ch. xxxvi.

from his indifference, the future well-being or unhappiness of the bride might be safely augured.

At the end of this month or so of probation the bride went finally to her husband's house to take her place in it as his wife. But it was not till after the birth of a son that she ruled as supreme in the household, and obtained full liberty of action. Till the birth of a son, for instance, she was not permitted to sit, converse, or eat with her husband, except in the privacy of her own apartment, if he chose to come there for that purpose. But the mother of a son, married by *nikha*, was female head of the household, and had in it almost absolute power. She could then visit her husband in his usual sitting-room, could join him at meals, and, in fact, act more like a wife according to the ideas of English *sahibs*.

One of the king's sons, who was afterwards killed in the streets of Lucknow during the Mutiny, was little better than a fool, and offended his father so much by his wild silly behaviour, that he was usually under confinement.<sup>1</sup> He was betrothed and married, however, according to custom, and the girl chosen for him was a nice quiet modest well-looking bride, the daughter of one of the inferior officers of the court. Everything went on as usual until the muslin sheet was thrown over them, and the mirror placed for him to see her face. When this was done, the band playing without in the courtyard, all the assembled company was startled by a piercing shriek from the bride, who fell down insensible, having fainted from pain and terror. The madman had torn her nose-ring off, and bit her severely, whilst they were concealed from view by the sheet. She was rescued by her friends, was happily not compelled to live with him, but lived and died a virgin widow.

In the inferior left-handed *muta* marriages so frequently contracted by the members of the royal family, the bridegroom did not appear in person. His sword and belt, or his head-dress, or even some ornament of his person,

<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Ali, the elder brother of the king Wajid Ali, is probably referred to, see p. 245 note.

represented him on the occasion. The usual form of words was gone through, but no one regarded the ceremony as very binding or sacred. Binding it was on the part of the woman, who was liable to suffer death if false to her duty; but such marriages were easily dissolved by the king or his male relations, when they felt so disposed. On the birth of a son the muta wife usually, but not always, became nikha, and the nikha ceremony was gone through between her and her lord. This occurred several times in the reign of the ex-king Wajid Aly.

One of the muta wives of the king, who had been betrothed to a fellow villager, a playmate of hers, in infancy, escaped once in disguise from the palace. Direful was the commotion in consequence. Guards and attendants were flogged, and the shrieks resounded through the courtyards and corridors. Messengers were dispatched in various directions to bring back the fugitive. She was found and brought back on the third day. I saw her after that for the first time. She had large black eyes, an oval face, and a fair complexion. Her features were regular, but wanted expression—all except the eyes, which seemed to look through one, so piercing and lustrous were they, swimming as if in a sea of passion.

Instead of punishing her terribly, as we all expected he would, the king seemed to pay her more attention than usual on her return; indeed so much so, that one day the queen my mistress remonstrated with him. 'She is but a villager,' said the queen: 'instead of indulgence she deserves punishment; and you grant her all her desires.' 'I grant her none of her desires,' was the king's reply; 'she will not express a wish for anything. I cannot make her out. Her eyes are full of fire, and all the rest is as a marble statue. She interests me. I offer her jewels and ornaments; she says she does not want them. I get dancing girls for her amusement; she looks on and smiles not. A villager! Yes, she is a villager. But, by the beard of the Prophet, she knows how to act the queen!'

The queen my mistress said no more. When the king



her son swore by the beard of the Prophet she was not pleased, for she was pious, and liked not profane oaths.

A month rolled on, and still this muta wife, the villager, was made much of. She was not liked. She had made no friends in the court, for she spoke scarcely at all. At the end of about a month after the conversation I have related, she disappeared altogether; but this time it was the king's vengeance caused her disappearance, not her own flight. I forget her name, and cannot tell what her fate was, but I am sure it was dreadful. The king had done his best to please and amuse her, and she would not be pleased or amused. I heard too that she openly told him she loved the village youth to whom she had been betrothed, and did not love him the king! If so, what could she expect? Kings will not be treated in that way by village girls. The young man to whom she had been betrothed suffered with her. I do not know what his fault was. Perhaps he had enticed her to leave the palace when she escaped disguised. I do not know. I only know that his mother came to the queen to complain of the loss of her son, and for nearly a month sat at the gate wailing, with ashes on her head, and demanding justice and mercy. She gave a great deal of trouble, poor thing! I could not help pitying her. Whether the queen asked the king her son anything about the young man, I do not know. She did not talk of the matter before me. Perhaps she knew all about the case beforehand. Whatever was the true explanation, all I know about it is this, that she ordered money to be given to the poor woman, and that she should be sent back to her village. Yes! she was a good and kind queen. If there was any fault in this affair, it was not hers, but the king's. Who can resist their fate?

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ANGEL OF DEATH

As the body becomes unclean the moment life departs, the relatives and friends hasten to leave the apartment, when assured that the angel of death has taken possession of it. Those employed at court to wash the body were Syuds, and took the corpse into a bathroom for that purpose, women ministering to women, and men to men. Some ornament, a ring on the finger, or a wristlet on the arm, was usually left, that the deceased might not enter empty-handed into Paradise.

A coffin was used to carry the corpse to the grave, but was not buried with it. The body was rolled in a new piece of white cloth, and laid in the coffin, and when the funeral procession took place, a pall or canopy of rich cloth, supported on the ends of four poles, was carried by four mourners over the coffin. It is not well that heaven should look upon a bare coffin. Arrived at the grave, the body was taken from the coffin, and the moollah read the Koran, and a man went into the grave, and placed two sticks across (in the form of a St. Andrew's cross), leaning on the head of the grave, against which the deceased might rest, when sitting up to be examined by the angels Monker and Nikel,<sup>1</sup> on the third day.

Held by the head and the feet, the body was then placed in the grave, and boards so arranged at some distance above it as to prevent the earth falling upon the corpse. The funeral party then retired forty paces for some minutes, and returned and looked in, to see that no change had taken place, before filling up the grave. Finally, a whisper for his eternal salvation was breathed into the ear of the corpse; the nearest of kin threw in the first clod of earth, and the grave was filled up.

<sup>1</sup> 'Munker or Munkar, and Nakir are the two recording angels.'—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations*, ed. Crooke, p. 76.

Fires were then lit at the foot and at the head of the grave, to keep off evil spirits, for do not the spirits of darkness avoid the light? The Koran was daily read, and the relatives returned daily at day-dawn to pray. On the morning of the third day the ceremony called *thujah*<sup>1</sup> was performed; the friends took bread and cakes, flour and oil, and cardamums, and, having kindled a fire, threw sweetmeats and flour and portions of bread into the flames, in the name of the deceased. Then, dipping their thumbs and little fingers into the oil, they touched their tongues and ears with it, still mentioning the name of the deceased. Lastly, the provisions were dropped bit by bit into the flames, the name being repeated as each morsel was thrown in. The *thujah* performed, the relatives went to the grave, and a moollah, or the nearest of kin, called out aloud to the deceased, 'How is it with you in the other world? Have you been well received?' The sounds first heard after asking these questions were taken as the answer—sounds of mirth or joy or lightness of heart or singing of birds indicating happiness, and sounds of woe indicating misery.

A jar of water, and a cake or two of unleavened bread, were placed every morning by the grave for forty days, and prayers were read daily for the same length of time, and the mourning continued as long in ordinary cases; but there were many exceptions to this rule. The queen my mistress had lights, and the Koran read, at the grave of her husband, Umjîd Aly Shah, for many months.

During this time of mourning the hair is not oiled, nor is the beard or the head shaven, nor are the clothes washed, nor is soormah (black dye)<sup>2</sup> used to adorn the eyes, nor is pawn eaten. And the widow mourns, with covered face, in white clothing, and wears no ornaments. Often has the queen said, if widows did their duty they would not marry again, but would mourn all their lives for their lords. But surely the world is wicked now, and the widow hastens to remarry, and her friends help her in this naughtiness!

<sup>1</sup> *Tijâ*, lit. 'the third day after burial.'

<sup>2</sup> *Surma*, collyrium.

The death of the king was in this wise : When the king, Umjid Aly Shah, felt his end approaching, he ordered the council-chamber to be prepared, and fresh carpets to be spread, and new cushions ; and he had his beard trimmed, and put on new and splendid clothing, and, having lain down in the council-chamber, he sent for the queen. There they both wept, and he spoke much to her in whispers. The boil or ulcer on his shoulder at that time was as large as a saucer, and the flesh all eaten away, it was said, from some poisonous ointment given by the physician. How can I tell if the report was true ? Such was the rumour in the palace, and of course the physician would not have dared to do so of himself. He must have been bribed to it.

When the king and the queen were weeping, then all the attendants wept ; and I was but a girl, yet I remember how sad a sight it was. I was in attendance on the queen at this time, and was near the door, having followed her with other servants. And I was told the king said to the queen, ' Beware of putting Wajid Aly on the throne ; if you do, all the family will perish, and your heart will be broken.' But what could the queen do ? The vizier and the English resident did as they pleased, and Wajid Aly was made king.

After much whispering talk, he said he would sleep, and the queen laid down his head gently and covered it. The attendants, suspecting he was dead, got her away with great difficulty, and she thought he was still sleeping ; but he was dead. He died, like a king, in his royal robes, on his throne, in his council-chamber.

And then the news went to the English resident, and the followers of Wajid Aly, the heir-apparent, hailed him as king, and the voice of wailing was drowned in the shouts of gladness ; and the timbrel, the sytar, and the drum, were played and beaten ; and the new king put on royal robes, and his mother, the queen, was summoned to go to the emanbarrah (the Moslem cathedral),<sup>1</sup> with the vizier and the English

<sup>1</sup> An *imanbara* is not comparable to a cathedral, which might be more suitably compared with the great mosque (Bara Masjid).

resident, that he might be crowned at once. So the body of the dead king, Umjid Aly Shah, was left to servants alone. All was joy and commotion, and cannons firing, and bands playing without, whilst the servants were preparing for the burial of the dead within.

The queen was detained long at the emanbarrah, nor was she allowed to return till the coronation was over, and all the court lords had taken the oaths of allegiance. It was past midnight before all this was over and she got back, and the king, Umjid Aly Shah, had died early in the day, before noon. Why his funeral was hurried over I do not know. Probably the new king had given orders to that effect. But, shortly after it was dark, the corpse was carried out. Pall-bearers, and the grave, and all were ready. So, before the queen returned from the coronation, the funeral was over.

Many were the whispers of foul play in the palace, and some that are older than I am, and were fully grown at the time, say that there is no doubt there was foul play. But what do I know? I was but a child.

I remember that, some time after, the queen my mistress reproved her son for having his own image stamped on the coinage of his father, after having had his father's image defaced. The queen said 'Have a new coinage, with your own image and superscription, made; but deface not the image of your father. How shall that son obtain the favour of heaven who mars his father's work?'

There is no doubt that women were put to death in the palace for infidelity to their lords, and why should they not? But I never saw any of them put to death. They were sometimes flogged, too, for minor offences, and the floggings in the palace were terribly severe. That several had been walled up in the palace, buried alive, there can be no doubt. The queen often spoke of them, and after the death of her husband she would not go about at night in consequence.

Coronations were usually held in the throne-room (now known as the Lal Barahdari). I know of no reason for supposing that the usual custom was departed from in the case of Wajid Ali Shah.

But I believe the commonest death was beheading, or being shot by the female guards of the palace. I do not believe that any women were walled up or buried alive during my time in the palace. The queen my mistress would not have allowed it. Her influence in the state was very great, and the king her son always consulted her in political matters.

As to the way in which the women were walled up, I have already said I never saw it, but I have heard the queen talk of it. The arms and the feet of the victim were tied, and a string united the two. This string was attached to a bolt or iron ring, prepared for the purpose in the wall, and another string was passed round the waist, and attached to the same bolt or ring behind. The victim thus stood up, with her back to the wall usually in a corner or recess, her head being uncovered. Masons attached to the palace, or eunuchs who had learned the art of masonry, then commenced to build a wall from the floor upwards—a stout, substantial wall, to shut up the victim in her tomb alive ; cutting off a corner or merely filling up a recess thereby, so that no injury was done to the room. It must have been terrible to the victim as the bricks rose higher and higher—to her waist, her breast, her eyes—till all light was shut out, and with it all hope. God is great ; and may God and the Prophet preserve us from sin !

## CHAPTER XIV

### AMUSEMENTS AT COURT

THE QUEEN cared little for amusement after the death of her husband Umjid Aly Shah. She would sit for hours at night poring over the Koran. The story-tellers' tales were her chief pleasure.

But Wajid Aly her son, the ex-king, was very fond of games and amusements of all kinds, and of music and singing and dancing. Even during the lifetime of his father, Wajid Aly would often dress as a female, and amuse the ladies of the harem by dancing as a woman. But this was done secretly at that time, he knew his father would not approve of it. When he became king, however, of course he did exactly as he pleased. He wrote much poetry, chiefly love-songs, in very choice Persian and Urdu, and filled up all his leisure hours with music and dancing, greatly to the disgust of the queen his mother.

In one of the months of the cold weather annually he had a play acted in his household, in which he and the ladies of the court took part, and which I saw several times. This play represented the abduction of a very beautiful girl, called Ghyzalah, by an evil monster (one of the genii of Arabic tales), and her subsequent restoration by Rajah Indra.

One of the king's wives was annually chosen to represent Ghyzalah, and, as she was very beautiful, the honour of representing her was eagerly sought in the harem; others were dressed as peris, with silver wings. Another represented Rajah Indra (the king of the peris, or fairies of Hindu mythology). Others were dressed up as evil genii and their attendants, with black ornaments and black wings and blackened faces. None wished to act these last parts, but at the expression of the king's wishes none could refuse.

The play was acted in the silver baradhurry of the Kaiser Bagh palace in Lucknow, which was divided for the purpose into three compartments. One of these compartments was richly decorated and fitted up as Rajah Indra's court, the pillars being covered with silver paper, and the richest ornaments lavished on the ceiling and walls, whilst at night it was a blaze of light with chandeliers and mirrors. In the centre was Indra's throne, and there the lady representing him sat in state in the richest apparel, attended by crowds of peris. It was a beautiful sight. Whilst all this was going on within, fountains without were playing scented waters, and the richest and choicest flowers were in the garden near. The seats of the garden were gilded or silvered over, so as to shine amid the flowers and fountains; in the daytime the sun's rays lit up the whole, and in the night thousands of lamps. The play lasted ten days, and for ten days and nights this gorgeous scene continued.

In another compartment a room was fitted up as a royal bedroom, and, on the first day of the play, Ghyzalah, beautiful as a *hourî*, was seen lying on a rich couch, as if asleep beside the king, who represented her husband. They lay so half the day, and all the household crowded to see. Wah ! wah ! but it was a sight worth seeing—The golden bedstead, and the rich counterpane, and the magnificent carpet, and the golden furniture, and the beautiful Ghyzalah, her delicate limbs in gauze or muslin edged with golden tissue, and her black hair shining with gems—altogether most lovely. Beside her lay the king, fat and burly, but in gorgeous apparel.

At length the king leaves the couch, and the black attendants of the evil genius carry off both the couch and Ghyzalah, and hide the lady.

As soon as the king, who acts the husband of Ghyzalah, becomes aware of the loss, he sets out as a *fakir* or *jogee*<sup>1</sup> to seek her. Almost naked, with his body painted, and only a cloth round his loins, a staff in his hand, and a wallet by his side, he goes all over the palace, avoiding

<sup>1</sup> *Faqir*, a mendicant: *Jogi*, a Hindu ascetic.



only the court of Indra in the baradhurry, shouting out, 'Hay Ghyzalah ! hay Ghyzalah !' His wife Khash Mehal, in the dress of sadness, of a light brown colour, accompanied him, and all the household not engaged in the play wore garments of the same colour for two days.

The queen my mistress at first refused to wear this dress of sadness herself, or to supply her household with it, but after a couple of years the king urged her so earnestly that she consented, protesting at the same time against the folly of the whole affair.

Through the gardens, and along the corridors, and from room to room, went the king, as a fakir, looking for Ghyzalah, and shouting 'Hay Ghyzalah ! hay Ghyzalah !' attended by Khash Mehal in the dress of sadness, and by other women.

All Lucknow was obliged to dress in garments of the prescribed colour, a light brown, during the search, and I believe an edict was issued, that anyone appearing in clothes of another colour should be imprisoned.

In the mean time Ghyzalah had been taken to the court of Rajah Indra, in the baradhurry. She was received there with great warmth by Rajah Indra, who wanted her to become one of his peris, and a good deal of the fun of the piece consisted in the love shown by Rajah Indra to Ghyzalah—everyone being aware that this Rajah Indra was not a man at all, but only a woman dressed up. Boppery bop ! but it was a glorious sight !

At length, when the fakir, wearied and dispirited with his fruitless search, had been supposed to have visited all the world, and to have searched every kingdom, for the lost Ghyzalah, one of the attendants of the evil genii, relenting on seeing the devotion of her husband, comes to him, and, having extorted many promises, informs him where the lost fair one is.

Bounding with joy, the fakir and his train visit the court of Indra, and they behold the beautiful Ghyzalah, on a seat beside the supposed god, and being fondled by him. Then begins a long colloquy, in which at length Indra

promises to restore Ghyzalah, if her husband will prove his worth in various ways—as a warrior, as a hunter, as a lover, as a musician, and as a dancer.

Marvellous was the sight when the fakir issued forth next day as a warrior, in shining armour, to prove his military prowess. He vanquishes one after another of the black attendants of the evil genii, and all the court of Indra applauds, and attend him daintily to his couch, to divest him of his beautiful armour. As a hunter, as a lover, as a musician, as a dancer he is equally successful; and, amidst the loud plaudits of the entire assembly, he receives back his bride, the beautiful Ghyzalah, and conducts her to the royal chamber from which she was first stolen away.

The same scene with which the play opens, concludes it.

It was the custom of the king, however, on the tenth day, to dance in the baradlurry for the entertainment of the multitude, and he insisted upon the queen, and Khash Mehal, and other leading ladies of court, giving him presents in money on the termination of the entertainment. On one occasion I remember the queen my mistress gave him a donation of 8,000 rupees (£300), with which he was well pleased.

Another amusement of the court, in which the king took great interest, was a kind of play between him and the king of the peris (*amil-i-jinnut*). Who this king of the peris was or where he came from, I never could make out, but he certainly did wonderful things, and people consulted him about sickness, and about troubles and misfortunes, and got wonderful answers and great relief. Wah! wah! but it was marvellous.

Several of the singers and natch-girls were dressed up as peris, and attended their king when the play took place. They would surround the throne of their king, who acted his part with great dignity; and, after we had all seen the king and his throne, the door would be shut, and the peris remained within with him whilst we were excluded. Then our king came from his own apartments, in his royal robes. He was a fine stout man, not more than thirty years of age,

but he looked much older ; and his attendants knocked at the door, and after some talk it was opened, and behold ! the king of the peris and his throne were both gone, and were nowhere to be seen, whilst all the rest remained as it was in the room ! No, there was no door by which he could have got out. There was only one door, and near that we were all gathered. He could not have got out that way without our seeing him. And the windows were very small and high up—too small for a man to get out. Nor was there any hole in the floor, all was solid masonry. No, there were many things too wonderful to be explained, and this is one of them. There are spirits good and bad, and some men can get their help to do wonderful things.

Then our king entered, and a rich carpet and cushion were brought for him, and a pillow against which to lean, just as in the durbar ; and he sat there, and a voice from the air gave him the salutation, ' Salaam aleikum ! ' (peace be with you,) and the king answered. It was the king of the peris gave the salutation, but he was invisible, and his voice appeared to come from overhead. God is great, and with the help of spirits wonderful things can be done. No, it was not any of the peris standing about that gave the salutation. It was the voice of a man, that man whom we had seen sitting on the throne, and now man and throne were both invisible.

And after much dancing and singing of the peris before the king, our king, there was again a colloquy between our king and the invisible ; and the king of the peris promised to come down to his brother, our king, and to sit and converse with him.

So the door was again shut. Bismillah ! but it was a wonderful thing and an inexplicable. When we were admitted again, the king of the peris was there upon his throne, just as he had been before, talking to our king Wajid Aly. Where could he have come from but from the air, in which he had been invisible ? Do I tell lies ? Did I alone see it ? Did not hundreds witness it as well as I ? If I saw it not with these eyes, may my life and death be both unfortunate.

A general dance, with music and singing, in which our king took part, and the king of the peris loudly applauded him<sup>1</sup>, concluded the entertainment.

<sup>1</sup> See Sleeman, *Journey through Oudh*, i, 43 sqq., 102 sqq., ii, 332 sqq. 'December 9, 1840.—In the news-writer's report of December 3, 1849, it is stated "that Ashfakos Sultan, Omrow Begum, one of the king's wives, reported to his majesty, that a man named Sadik Allee had come to Lucknow while the king was suffering from palpitation of the heart; and in the disguise of a Dervish, hired a house in Muftee Ganj, and taken up his residence in it. He gave himself out as one of the kings of the Fairies (amil-i-Jinnut); and the fakcer to whom his majesty's confidential servants, the singers, had taken him to be cured of his disease, was no other than this Sadik Allee. The king on hearing this sent for Sadik Allee, who was seized and brought before him on December 2. He confessed the imposture, but pleaded that he had practised it merely to obtain some money, and that the singers were associated with him in all that he did. The king soothed his apprehensions, . . .

At night the king sent for the minister, and summoning Sadik Allee, bid him dress himself exactly in the same manner as he was dressed on the night he visited him, and prepare a room in the palace in exactly the same manner as he had prepared his own to receive his majesty on that night. He chose a small room in the palace, and under the ceiling he suspended a second ceiling, so that no one could perceive how it was fixed on, and placed himself between the two. When all was ready the king went to the apartment with the minister, accompanied by Ruzee-od-Dowlah, the head singer. When the door of the apartment was closed, they first heard a frightful voice without being able to perceive whence it came. Neither the minister nor the king could perceive the slightest opening or fissure in the ceiling. They then came out and closed the door, but immediately heard from within the peaceful salutation of 'Salaam Aleekoom', and the man appeared within as King of the Fairies. . . . Turning an angry look on Ruzee-od-Dowlah, the king said, 'All the evil that I have so often heard of you, men of Rampoor, I have now with mine own eyes realised.' " See *infra*, pp. 326-7.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE QUEEN'S FAVOURITE STORY

BEFORE beginning a story, the story-teller always repeated the following lines :

Sleeps all the world—  
Waking is God alone—  
This tale is not so false,  
Nor are its words so sweet—  
Eyes of mine saw it not,  
From hearsay I repeat it.  
Of him who hath composed it,  
False or true, the meed be his.

And of all the stories the queen heard, the following was the one she most liked, and which she had most frequently repeated to her :

There was a king who was becoming old without having had any son. Indeed he had no children ; his wife was barren. One day he called his vizier to him, and asked his advice. Now the vizier was a wise man and skilful, and he said, ' In the middle of a great jungle far, far off, many hundreds of miles away, lives a holy Fakir. He sits at the foot of a great mango-tree, and sleeps twelve years at a time, waking also for the same length of time ; and he is surrounded by spirits and ogres of superhuman power, who carefully protect him from the intrusion of mankind. This Fakir knows all enchantments, and one of the mangoes from his holy tree will cure any disease, and remove barrenness.'

So next day the king sat in durbar in great state, and summoned all his nobles and the officers of his army and of his household, and told them what the vizier had said. But all were afraid, and not one offered to face the perils of the way, and procure for the king one of the enchanted mangoes, or the Fakir's advice.

Then the king asked if there was any man ready to risk his

life in this service ; and they all, with one voice, every man of them, said, ' I am ready.'

So the king had a glass of sherbet and a plate of salt brought into the divan, and said, ' Whoever undertakes this work must devote himself to it by drinking the sherbet and tasting the salt.' Every man sat still. No man stirred. All were afraid.

At length the vizier himself, stepping forward, pledged himself to the enterprise, and drank the sherbet and tasted the salt. When he had so done every man in the divan lifted up his voice and said, ' I too am ready.' But the king, despising vain words, arose from his throne and embraced the vizier as a brother, and kissed him, and promised him half the kingdom on his return.

So the vizier set his house in order, and went forth, with camp and followers, on his long journey, the king escorting him, with great pomp and splendour, to the gates of the town.

Many weary days did the vizier journey on, now crossing plains, now mountains, another time deep and rapid rivers, and again pathless jungles ; but his heart was good, and God was with him.

Wearied with a long day's march, he threw himself down one evening under a tree to rest himself, and as he was trying to go to sleep he heard a parrot and a mina (a kind of magpie) conversing in the tree above his head ; and he knew the language of birds, and listened, and lo ! they were talking of him.

' Great is the sorrow of the king,' said the mina, ' and great the valour of the vizier ; but alas ! it is all of no avail. He will never reach the Fakir.'

' Why so, my brother ? ' asked the parrot.

' Because there is a deep broad rapid river before him, on which no boat ever swam, and beyond that for a hundred miles the country is defended by ogres and evil spirits, whom no man can pass, and they watch day and night.'

' The vizier doubtless relies on God,' said the parrot.

So the vizier was comforted by what the parrot said, and turned and slept soundly, and with a bold heart set forward

next day on his journey again, for his motives and conscience were good.

And after journeying many days the vizier came at length to the mighty river which no man could pass, so broad and deep and rapid was it, and on it no boat had ever floated. There was no bridge, no human being appeared, nothing but the mass of water rolling dark eternally on; and for a time the vizier's heart sank within him, and he wept. But anon he remembered what the parrot had said, 'The vizier doubtless relies on God,' and he dismissed his fears, and felt stout of heart again, and prayed to Heaven to help him. Now his motives and his conscience were good, and Heaven heard his prayer, and he heard a voice saying to him, 'Be not afraid, walk straight on.'

Right in front of him was the world of waters, and for a moment his heart shrivelled up within him, as a leaf is shrivelled up by the fire; but it was only for a moment, and saying to himself, 'I trust in God,' he walked into the waters.

Behold, the angel Gabriel was with him, and bore him across the river safe to the other side.

And when they had arrived at the other side, the angel Gabriel said to him, 'Thou didst trust in God, and thy faith is rewarded. What seekest thou?'

So he told the whole story, and why he had come, to the angel, and the angel said, 'Dost thou know that for a hundred miles round the Fakir ogres and evil spirits guard the territory, and no human foot can pass them? They sleep not day or night.'

'I trust in God,' was the vizier's reply.

So the angel was much pleased, and gave the vizier two packets—a packet of fire and a packet of water—with instructions how to use them, and left him to go on his way rejoicing.

And now the vizier entered a thick dark forest, wherein was no path, but the angel had told him how to proceed, and by the sun in the daytime and by the stars at night he guided himself ever onwards, straight towards the Fakir, never sleeping or slumbering for this hundred miles.

And as he went on one dark night, no light but that of the stars visible, and they but dim, he heard mutterings as of evil spirits in front of him, and on his right hand, and on his left, and behind him. In his hand he had his staff, and though his flesh crept and his hair stood on end, he went ever onwards through the dark forest. And the mutterings increased to thunder, and lightnings played about him, and trees fell, and last of all, frightful awful shapes began to appear—such shapes as would terrify mankind in crowds by day, and the vizier was alone in a thick forest by night.

Last of all, a mouth of fire, like the opening of a great furnace, glared before him, with large yellow saucer eyes above it, all alight with hate and fury, and the mouth drew near as if to swallow him, whilst he saw a thousand claws, as of lions, tigers, and bears, ready to drag his body asunder.

Shouting out, 'I trust in God!' the vizier scattered the packet of fire around him, as the angel had directed, and the ogres and evil spirits were burnt up, and the vizier was saved from that danger.

But, saved though he was from the ogres and the evil spirits, another danger awaited him. The fire, which had consumed them, seized upon the trees and the brushwood around, and a great conflagration blazed on every side, and the vizier was nearly suffocated with the smoke, and saw the fire ever drawing nearer. Then he bethought him of the packet of water, and he scattered it around; and the water spread over the fire, and extinguished it, and then swept on in a body towards the great river.

Wearied and faint with his excessive labours, the vizier repeated, 'I trust in God!' and found himself on the further verge of the great forest at daybreak, and a plain before him, in the centre of which rose the mango-tree, under which the Fakir was sitting. And the air of this plain removed all his weariness at once, and he felt fresh and strong and active, and gave praise and glory to God.

Now the Fakir was a very old man, and his appearance was dreadful, so that no man without faith could look on him and retain his senses. Grass and shrubs grew all over the



Fakir, and his long white hair fell to the ground, and, as he sat, his eyelashes, when cast down, touched the ground, and all about him was strange and weird and awful.

Birds of beautiful plumage and exquisite song were in large numbers in the mango-tree above him.

The vizier came before the Fakir salaaming low, and as the Fakir took no notice, the vizier stood on one foot, with hands joined, in the attitude of submission and requests, in front of the Fakir.

The vizier still trusted in God, and the Fakir still took no notice of him.

Then, for four-and-twenty hours the vizier so stood, without food and without drink. When the four-and-twenty hours had elapsed, the Fakir raised his long eyelashes, and with open eyes looked at the vizier for an hour, and then said :

‘What do you want?’

The voice was as thunder, or as the rolling of distant drums—a voice to strike awe and terror into man’s heart. But the vizier trusted in God, and answered bravely, and told the Fakir all that was in his heart, and wherefore he had come.

Then the Fakir took his great staff up, and gave it to the vizier, and said :

‘Strike the mango-tree one blow, and whatsoever falls from it is yours. Take it, and begone, and trouble me no more.’

So the vizier did as he had been directed, and took the staff, and struck the tree one blow. Two mangoes fell, and the vizier quickly took them up, and fastened them in his waist-band, and laid the staff by the Fakir’s side, and made his obeisance. But the Fakir heeded him not, his eyes were again on the ground, and his long eyelashes drooping down covered them.

So the vizier praised God, and turned on his way back rejoicing.

The magical virtue of the mangoes made the way light and easy to him. He encountered no dangers. The angel Gabriel again assisted him at the river. At the other side he found his horse and attendants, and went on his way back rejoicing.

The fame of his return spread to the court of the king, who came out a day's journey to meet him, bringing with him all the courtiers who had been at the durbar, and who had been afraid to undertake the expedition. And when the king spoke to them of it, they all answered with one voice, 'We too were all ready to go.'

The vizier gave the king one of the mangoes, and kept the other for his own wife, who was also barren.

So the queen ate the mango, and in due time a son was born to her—a fine hearty healthy boy—and the king was wild with delight. The vizier got half the kingdom, and the country was all a scene of rejoicing, and the king opened his treasury for three days, so that all the poor might help themselves.

When the soothsayers and the astrologers were collected together to prepare the boy's horoscope, then the king was sad again, for the wise men told him that the boy would be heavy on his father's head for nine years and nine months and nine days. When that period was once passed, then all danger was over. So the king sorrowfully had a beautiful palace built for the prince, with high walls all round, and in this was all that could delight the boy, or minister to his happiness; and daily, almost hourly, the king got news of his son's welfare.

Now the vizier's wife had had a daughter, beautiful as a peri, and she was similarly brought up in the other half of the kingdom. Both were instructed in all learning, and were good as they were learned and clever.

When the fated period had passed away, the young prince was received in court with great rejoicings, and lived happily for some years with his father.

One day, in passing through the bazaar, he saw Biswa Lukhy, a beautiful young female, seated on the roof of a house. Their eyes met, and they were in love. She was not a girl of a reputable life; but she fascinated the prince, and he spent with her all the hours he could spare from the palace, keeping the matter a secret from his father and mother.

So things were in this state when the parents of the prince

thought of marrying him, and they chose the daughter of the vizier, who had half the kingdom, and this daughter was beautiful as a pearl. By this marriage all would be made happy, and the kingdom would be reunited into one.

So the portrait of the prince was sent to the court of the vizier, and the portrait of the vizier's daughter, all set in diamonds, was sent back. The diamonds were rich and beautiful, but the eyes and features of the face represented in this portrait were brighter and more beautiful than the diamonds. The king and queen were charmed with the portrait, and sent for their son to come and see it. But he was in the bazaar with Biswa Lukhy, by whom he had been fascinated.

Now Biswa Lukhy knew all that was going on, and had heard of the arrival of the beautiful portrait, and detained the prince on purpose, plotting with her friends how to destroy the portrait before the prince should see it.

So Biswa Lukhy sent for seven old witches renowned in that town, and, after hearing their own accounts of what they could each do, chose one of them, told her what she wanted, and promised her rich rewards if she would so deface the portrait, or mar its beauty, that the prince would have no longing to see the original.

The witch went off to perform what was desired, and, having torn her clothes and put ashes on her head, she sat down, weeping and wailing, under the balcony where the queen used to sit.

The queen sent an attendant to inquire the cause of her sorrow, and the witch replied that if the queen would let her come into the presence she would detail it all, not otherwise. The queen admitted her, and she proceeded to tell a sad tale of family loss and bereavement, as having happened in the city where the vizier held his court, and the young princess lived.

The queen then gave the witch money, and said, 'You have seen the princess, then?'

'Every day for years,' was the reply, 'Did I not daily go to the vizier's palace till I lost my son?'

So the queen got out the portrait, and proceeded to take off

its numerous wrappings to show it to the witch, and asked if it was like the princess.

The witch, pretending she could not see it properly in the room, took the portrait outside into the verandah, and there with colour prepared for the purpose she quickly destroyed the lustre of the eyes, and rendered the mouth ugly. Then, hastily wrapping it up again, as she was bringing it in, she said to the queen that it was exactly like the princess, who was beautiful as one of the peris of the court of Indra.

Then, after some further conversation, the old witch, child of the devil, made many obeisances, and took her leave.

The prince soon after came in, and the queen his mother put the portrait into his hands at once, telling him to keep it till he should obtain possession of the princess as his bride. He took the portrait to his own apartments, and, opening it, saw a picture of a girl, blear-eyed and ugly mouthed, in rich apparel, and he did not long to see the original. But being a dutiful son, and knowing that it was of advantage to have the kingdom reunited again, he made no opposition to the marriage, resolving in his own mind, however, that Biswa Lukhy should have still all his devotion.

As the day drew near for the bridegroom's procession to go and meet the bride, and bring her home, Biswa Lukhy pretended to be taken ill with fear and anxiety, and would not be confronted till the prince promised to wear a bandage over his eyes, under the wedding garland that always adorned the bridegroom's head, and not to look upon his bride till she, Biswa Lukhy, gave him leave.

It was a very sad wedding for the young bride, who began to fear that her husband was blind, and that the fact had been purposely concealed. However, like her father the vizier, she trusted in God.

Some months passed away, and the young prince spent his time with Biswa Lukhy; and his young bride and his father and his mother were all equally sorry: but still he had never seen his bride, for Biswa Lukhy had not permitted him, and he kept his promise. And his bride was ever more beautiful and more sad.

At length the princess made up a scheme of her own, and got her father-in-law, the king, to help her in carrying it out. He got an old palace of his in the city, not far from where Biswa Lukhy lived, fitted up, and the princess went to live there. And the king ordered all the milkwomen to remove to the neighbourhood of that palace, and thither they removed and lived there, so that it was called the milkwomen's quarter.

So the princess got a rich dress of many-coloured silk woven for herself, and made up in the manner of the dresses worn by the Hindu milkwomen—full round the waist, and the end crossing over the breast, from the right side to the left shoulder, and then over the head, hanging down to the waist. And she had ornaments, the same as the Hindu milk-sellers wore, made, but of the richest materials, and a pitcher of gold, light and beautiful, but still like the brass vessels in which the Hindu milkwomen carried the milk about.

Having got all these things prepared, she took her pitcher of milk, and drew her veil over her face, and she went towards the house where Biswa Lukhy lived, and there, just under the window, she began to sing—

Come, buy my milk,  
Or good or bad ;  
Come buy my milk,  
And make me glad.  
Nor rest, nor peace,  
Nor joy is won,  
Nor sorrows cease,  
Till work is done.  
Then buy my milk,  
Or good or bad ;  
Come buy my milk,  
And make me glad.

The prince heard this strange song, so different from the usual puffing up of the seller's wares—heard it and wondered, and went, simply from curiosity, to the window, to see the milkwoman. Her appearance surprised him—the rich dress, and the beauty of the form—so he sent for her, and asked the price of her vessel of milk. He could not see her face, which

was veiled, but he was pleased with the grace of her demeanour and the modesty of her manner. 'The price of my milk is the full of this vessel of silver,' was the answer to his question.

He had the milk taken and the vessel filled with silver in return, and then addressed her in poetry gaily—

Come with joy and gladness,  
All gloom away we'll chase;  
Here put aside your sadness,  
And unveil your pretty face.

But her answer was—

My milk is sold,  
My work is done,  
My face I hold  
My lord's alone.

So saying she departed, and Biswa Lukhy was sulky that day, seeing the impression that the milkmaid had made.

The next day the princess came again, and the same scene was repeated, and Biswa Lukhy was still more angry.

The third day the princess came again, and the same scene was repeated, and Biswa Lukhy could not restrain her rage, but would have struck the pretended milkmaid, only that the prince prevented it, and, to take the more care of her, followed her to the milk-women's quarter. There, as she was entering a side door of one of the outhouses of the palace in which she lived, the prince again addressed her softly in poetry once more—

Thy form is fair,  
Thy jewels rare;  
But what thy face,  
I cannot trace.  
With envious fold  
Thy veil doth hold  
Its beauty hid,  
My glance forbid.  
Thou be thou kind,  
And ease my mind;  
Thy home, thy name,  
Thy state proclaim.

And the maiden-wife answered him kindly, and said—

Not now I reveal to thee,  
Or make it all clear ;  
Return in the night to me.  
And all thou shalt hear.

So saying she went rapidly inside, and the prince, taking note of the door, returned as soon as the light of day had departed, and night had set in.

In the meantime the princess had prepared everything for his reception. The sitting-rooms were decorated with the richest carpets, and mirrors were on the walls, and chandeliers hung from the roof, multiplied a thousandfold by the mirrors on all sides, and a magnificent banquet was spread out in the dining-room. In her own room, all that art and luxury could do to render the scene enchanting was accomplished, whilst delicious perfumes were wafted abroad from golden censers, and soft music played at a distance. The princess herself was in her costliest apparel, every beauty heightened by art, and the rich raven tresses of her hair adorned with flowers and gems, whilst her cheeks became red and pale by turns as she thought of her husband and her love.

At length, as she was impatiently waiting in her own apartment, a eunuch, who had been stationed there for the purpose, introduced him into the sitting-room, and he was amazed at the wealth and luxury of the scene. But when the princess herself, in all the blaze of her beauty, appeared before him, he forgot everything else, and would have fondled her in his arms, thinking it was only the milkmaid still. She repelled him, however, and would suffer no embrace until all was known and all revealed. They sat opposite to each other ; a female story-teller was introduced and began to give a history of a prince and princess, a history similar to theirs, and as the story proceeded the prince knew who she was, and, telling the story-teller to depart, pressed the princess to his heart, and heaven smiled upon their virtuous love.

Next morning he sent for Biswa Lukhy, and, embracing his wife, reproached the evil doer for having kept him so long from so much happiness ; and then, turning to his wife, he said :

'Now choose the manner of her death, my love. Shall she be buried alive, or shot to death with poisoned arrows, or torn into four pieces with wild horses?' But the princess would not choose, leaving it to her lord to do as seemed good to him. So the prince had Biswa Lukhy first buried alive, care having been taken to give her air enough to live for twenty-four hours, and when the twenty-four hours were completed, and she had felt the bitterness of that death, then she was taken out and shot at with poisoned arrows, the prince himself putting an arrow into each of those breasts on which his head had often reposed, in consequence of her falsehood and fascination; and, before she was dead, four wild horses were brought and her arms and legs attached firmly one to each, and then the horses were driven off, and Biswa Lukhy was torn to pieces.

Such was the story that, of all others, the queen my mistress delighted most to hear; and when the affectionate meeting of the prince and princess was described, with their happiness, I have seen the tears stand in her eyes with sympathy and joy.

And was not the end of Biswa Lukhy cruel? you ask, and was the fault altogether hers? No, the end of Biswa Lukhy was *not* cruel. She deserved it all, the vile slave, for keeping a prince and princess apart by her falsehood and her fascination, and the prince was quite right to put the poisoned arrows into her bosom, for was not her heart false? Inshallah! may all who act like her suffer like her!

Such is the end of Elihu Jan's story.



## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCLUSION

ODDH became a kingdom in 1814.<sup>1</sup> Before that, its sovereigns were styled nawabs. The first king, Ghazee-ood-deen Hyder, reigned from 1814 to 1827, and left in the treasury, at his death, ten millions of pounds sterling. His son, Nussir-ood-deen Hyder, some of whose doings are recorded in the *Private Life of an Eastern King*, reigned from 1827 to 1837, and left in the treasury at his death about £700,000. He had squandered not only the regular annual income of the kingdom on his pleasures and favourites, but also £9,300,000 of the treasure accumulated by his father—that is, about a million a year in addition to the ordinary annual income. Nussir-ood-deen Hyder was succeeded by his uncle, Mohamed Aly Shah, who reigned from 1837 to 1842, and left behind him in the treasury about £800,000. His son, Umjid Aly Shah, consort of that queen whose life is illustrated in these pages, reigned from 1842 to 1847, and left behind him in the treasury £1,360,000. He was succeeded by his son Wajid Aly Shah, now the ex-king of Oudh, who reigned till the annexation of the country to the British dominions in India in 1856.

The account given by Elihu Jan, in the foregoing pages, of the palace life of Umjid Aly Shah and Wajid Aly Shah, the two last kings of Oudh, is simple, plain, and unvarnished. In the present chapter I propose to illustrate the same life from other sources, and chiefly from Sir W. Sleeman's, *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh*, which was published in London in 1858.

Sleeman, having been resident at the court of Lucknow from 1849 to 1856, had of course the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the state of the palace, and the ordinary life of its principal inmates. But his work was

<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1819 that Ghazie-d-din Haider assumed the title of King.

intended to serve a political purpose—his object was to show how ruinous the misgovernment of the country had been—and consequently the *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh* is more taken up with the state of the provinces, the history of the leading families, and the conversations the resident held with the principal local authorities, than with the doings at court. These doings are, indeed, but incidentally introduced here and there, and hence the utility of collecting them together, to serve as an illustration of a state of society and of a court now probably for ever passed away.

In August 1840, writing to Lord Dalhousie, the resident gives the following account of Wajid Aly Shah, then the reigning sovereign: 'The king's habits will not alter. He was allowed by his father to associate, as at the present he does, with singers from his boyhood, and he cannot endure the society of other persons. He no longer makes any attempt to conceal his determination to live exclusively in their society, and to hear and see nothing of what his officers do, or his people suffer. Whatever he has, he is ready to give to singers and eunuchs, or he allows them to take. No man can take charge of any office without anticipating the income by large gratuities to them, and the average gratuity which a contractor for a year of a district yielding three lacs of rupees annually (£30,000), is made to pay before he leaves the capital to enter upon his charge, is estimated to be 50,000 rupees (£5,000).' And again, in the same letter: 'The king is utterly unfit to have anything to do with the administration, since he has never taken, or shown any wish to take, any heed of what is done or suffered in the country.' He spends all his time with singers and the females they provide to amuse him, and is for seven and eight hours together living in the house of the chief singer, Rajee-ood-Dowlah, a fellow who was only lately beating a drum to a party of dancing girls, on some four rupees a month. These singers are all Domes, the lowest of the low castes of India, and they and the eunuchs are now the virtual sovereigns of the country.'

In the council of regency, which the resident proposed, to supersede the king, the king's mother—the queen my mistress' of Elihu Jan's narrative—is mentioned first by Sir William, proving that she was a superior woman. The resolution which she formed to go to England after annexation, and the perseverance and energy with which she carried out that resolution, are sufficient to prove that the impression of the resident relative to her ability was correct.

In September 1840, writing to the Governor-General, the resident informs him in a postscript: 'I may mention that the king is now engaged in turning into verse a long prose history called 'Hydree.' About ten days ago all the poets of Lucknow were assembled at the palace to hear his majesty read his poem. They sat with him, listening to his, and reading their own, poems, from nine at night till three the next morning. One of the poets, the eldest son of a late minister, Aga Meen by name, told me *that the versification was exceedingly good for a king*. These are, I think, the only men, save the minister, the eunuchs, and the singers, who had had the honour of conversing with his majesty since I came here.'

In writing, during the same month, to Sir H. M. Elliott he says: 'The king is in constant dread of poison, and would do anything to get relieved of that dread, and of all further importunity on the state of the country. His chief wife (Khash Mehal) would poison him to bring on the throne her son, and to restore to herself her paramour, who is now at Cawnpore, waiting for some such change. Her uncle the minister would, the king thinks, be glad to see him poisoned, in the hope of having to conduct affairs during the minority. He is afraid to admonish his other chief wife for her infidelities with the chief favourite and singer, lest she should poison him to go off with her paramour to Rampore, whither he has sent the immense wealth that the king has lavished on him.'

Under date December 9, 1840, the resident writes: 'The king had several interviews with one Sadik Aly, who

pretended to be the king of the fairies. His fairy majesty described the symptoms from which the king suffered, and prescribed remedies—these remedies consisting chiefly of rich offerings to the fairies, who were to relieve him. He frequently received letters from the fairy king to the same effect, written in an imperious style suited to the occasion. The farce was carried on for several months, and the king at different times is supposed to have given this Sadik Aly some two lacs of rupees (£20,000), which he shared with his singers.'

In the same month the king, having become convinced of the knavery of this Sadik Aly, and of the fact of the chief singer and others of his court having been accomplices, promised Captain Bird, the assistant-resident, that he would banish the culprits across the Ganges. As the king seemed in no hurry, however, to perform this promise, Captain Bird demanded an audience, and was at first refused, the king pleading indisposition. Ultimately the demand was complied with, and Captain Bird, on being introduced, found the king in a small inner room of the palace, lying on a cot covered with a quilt or ruzaie. There were closed doors on the side of the room where the cot was placed, and Captain Bird perceived that persons were listening to the conversation. On the minister advancing to meet him at the door, Captain Bird declined to take his hand, saying 'I believe you are an accomplice of these fiddlers, and are afraid to have them removed, or else his majesty's orders would have been carried out before this.' Captain Bird then advanced to the king, and shook hands with him, when the following conversation took place :

*Capt. Bird.* I have come to claim the fulfilment of your majesty's promise to dismiss the singers, Gholam Ruza and his sister, and Kotub Aly, and to send them across the Ganges.

*The King.* I never gave any such promise.

*Capt. Bird.* Your majesty's promise was given in the following words. (Captain Bird here read the court news-writer's report of the same.)

The king is uneasy, and apparently at a loss for an answer.

*The Minister.* His Majesty has ascertained from the confession of Sadik Aly himself that Gholam Ruza and his sister are innocent in this matter.

*Capt. Bird.* His majesty told me that the deception had been so fully proved that they were speechless ; and further, that his majesty had thereupon spit in their faces.

*The King.* No, not in Gholam Ruza's. His sister and Kotub Aly are alone guilty.

*Capt. Bird.* If these parties are not removed according to your majesty's promise, all Lucknow will say that I have been bribed to permit them to remain.

*The King.* That is all nonsense. Do you want me to swear that Gholam Ruza is innocent, and that I never gave the promise you mention ?

Then, calling the minister, the king placed his right hand on the minister's head and said, ' I swear, as if this were my son's head, and by God, that I believe Gholam Ruza to be entirely innocent ; and that I never promised to turn him out, or banish him beyond the Ganges.'

*Capt. Bird.* Your majesty has, at all events, acknowledged the guilt of Gholam Ruza's sister, and of Kotub Aly. Let punishment be executed on the guilty.

*The King.* When absent from my sight, they are as far off as if they were across a hundred rivers. I know they are intriguers. I shall keep my eye on them.

*Capt. Bird.* I have reported this case officially. Your majesty has made me a participator in the breaking of your word.

*The King.* This case has reference only to my own household, not to the government ; but if you wish to use force take me by the beard, and pull me from the throne.

*Capt. Bird.* Often when force might have been used, under your own sign-manual, on these fiddlers interfering in state affairs, the resident has forbore. Now, who can be your friend, or save you from danger ? I must report all to the resident.

*The King.* Yes. Report that the king has changed his mind, broken his word, and will not fulfil his promise. Ask for permission to employ force for the removal of these men, and see if he will permit it.

Captain Bird shortly after took his leave, and next day Sadik Aly, the pretended king of the fairies, had a dress of honour conferred upon him by the king, and a hundred rupees a month added to his salary. Gholam Ruza and a relative of his were seated behind his majesty, in his carriage and four, the same evening, driving through the streets of Lucknow.

Six months afterwards, however, in May 1850, the king had fourteen fiddlers and singers, amongst whom were Gholam Ruza, his father, sister, and brother, seized and imprisoned, and shortly after banished them across the Ganges, taking from them all the wealth they had retained in Lucknow, for they had sent the greater part out of Oudh. The immediate cause of this banishment was the king's having found out that his divorced wife, Surfraz Muhal, was living with the chief singer, Gholam Ruza.

Captain Bird was afterwards a strenuous opposer of the annexation of Oudh, and agent in England for the ex-king. He was in attendance on the queen dowager of Oudh when she visited England.

The following scene is highly characteristic, and is certainly as extravagant as anything related by Elihu Jan :

'In the beginning of September 1850, the king became enamoured of one of his mother's waiting-maids and demanded her in marriage. She was his mother's favourite bed-fellow, and his mother would not part with her. The king became angry, and to soothe him, his mother told him, it was purely out of regard for him and his children that she refused to part with this young woman, as she had a *sampun*, or the coiled figure of a snake, under the hair on the back of her neck. No man will purchase a horse with such a mark, or believe that any family can be safe in which a horse or mare with such a mark is kept. His mother told him, that, if he cohabited with a woman having such a mark he and all his children would perish.

'The king then said that he might probably have, among his many wives, some with marks of this kind, and that this might account for his frequent attacks of palpitation of the heart. "No doubt," said the queen dowager. "We have long thought so; but your majesty gets into such a towering passion when we venture to speak of your wives that we have been afraid to give expression to our thoughts and fears." "Perhaps," said the king, "I may owe to this cause the death, lately, of my poor son, the heir apparent." "We have long thought so," said the queen.

'The chief eunuch, Busheer, was forthwith ordered to inspect the back of the necks of all, save that of the chief consort, mother of the late and present heir apparent.

'He reported that he had found the fatal mark upon the necks of no less than eight of the king's wives—to wit, Nishat Mehal, Koorshed Mehal, Soleman Mehal, Huzrut Mehal, Dara Begum, Buree Begum, Chotee Begum, and Huzrut Begum. The chief priest was summoned, and divorce from the whole eight pronounced forthwith; and the ladies were ordered to depart, with all that they had saved whilst in the palace. Some of their friends suggested that Mohammedans were but unskilful judges in such matters, and that a court of Brahmans should be assembled, as they had whole volumes devoted exclusively to this science.

'The most learned Brahmans were accordingly collected, and they declared that, though there were marks resembling in some degree the *sampun*, it was of no importance, and the evil threatened might be averted by singeing the head of the snake with a hot iron. The ladies were very indignant, and six of them insisted upon leaving the palace forthwith, in virtue of the divorce. Two only consented to remain, the Buree and Chotee Begums.<sup>1</sup>

One of the six thus divorced, Huzrut Mehal, was the mother of that Brijis Kudr, son of the king, whom the rebels proclaimed king of Oudh during the mutiny, notwithstanding her opposition. She is now living in Nepaul, and

<sup>1</sup> Sleeman's *Journey*, i. 107. [W.K.]

lately got a village from Jung Bahadur, yielding her about 4,000 rupees a year.

The following is an English lady's description of two beauties of the court of Oudh, and is taken from Mrs. Park's *Wanderings*, vol. i, p. 88 :<sup>1</sup> 'The king's wives were superbly dressed, and looked like creatures of the Arabian tales. One Taj Mehal, was so beautiful, that I could think of nothing but Lalla Rookh in her bridal attire. I never saw anyone so lovely, either black or white. Her features were perfect, and such eyes and eyelashes I never beheld before. At present she appears to be the favourite, and is about fourteen years of age. She is a little creature, with the smallest hands and feet, and the most timid modest look imaginable. You would have been charmed with her, she is so graceful and swanlike.

' Her dress was of gold and scarlet brocade, and her hair was literally strewed with pearls, which hung down upon her neck in long single strings, terminating in large pearls, which mixed with and hung as low as her hair, which was curled on each side of her head in long ringlets, like the beauties of the court of Charles II. On her forehead she wore a small gold circlet, from which depended and hung, half-way down, large pearls, interspersed with emeralds. Above this was a bird of paradise plume, from which strings of pearls were carried over the head, as we turn back our hair.

' Her earrings were immense gold rings, with pearls and emeralds suspended all round in large strings, the pearls increasing in size, towards the centre. She had a nose-ring also, with large round pearls and emeralds, and her necklaces, &c., were too numerous to be described.'

' She wore long sleeves, open at the elbow ; and her dress was a full petticoat, with a tight body attached, and open only at the throat. She had several attendants to bear her train when she walked ; and her women stood behind her couch to arrange her head-dress, when, in moving, the

<sup>1</sup> This description refers to the wives of Nasiru-d-din Haider, not of Wajid Ali Shah. [The quotation is not verbally exact.]



strings of pearls got entangled in the immense robe of scarlet and gold she had thrown around her. This beautiful creature is the envy of all the other wives, and the favourite at present both of the king and his mother, both of whom have given her titles of honour.

'The other newly-made queen is nearly European, but not a whit fairer than Taj Mehal. She is, in my opinion, plain; but by the native ladies she is considered very handsome. She was the king's favourite before he saw Taj Mehal. Her head-dress was a coronet of diamonds, with a fine crescent and plume of the same. She is the daughter of a European merchant, and is accomplished for the inhabitant of a zenana, as she writes and speaks Persian fluently, as well as Hindustanee. It is said that she is teaching the king English; though, when we spoke to her in English, she said she had forgotten it, and could not reply in that language. She was, I fancy, afraid of the queen dowager, as she evidently understood us, and when asked if she liked being in the harem, she shook her head and looked quite melancholy. Jealousy of the new favourite, however, appeared to be the cause of her discontent as though they sat on the same couch, they never addressed each other.

'The mother of the king's children, and of the heir-apparent, did not visit us at the queen dowager's; but we went to see her at her own palace. She is, after all, the consort of most political importance, and, it is said, has great power over her royal husband, whose ears she sometimes boxes soundly.'

So much for the inner life of the palace; and now, with a few observations on the way in which business was transacted in the court of the ex-king, and the state of the country under him, I shall conclude. If anyone can have a doubt as to the expediency of having annexed a country, the government of which was so frightfully mismanaged, let him consider calmly the picture here presented, and then reflect that Oudh, at the present moment, is one of the most peaceful, quiet, orderly, and best-governed countries in India, advancing rapidly in a career of development of its

natural resources, and of internal improvement—so rapidly, indeed, that where, eight years ago, all was confusion, lawlessness, rapine, and violence, roads are now being constructed, navigable rivers opened up to trade, the country can be traversed from one end to the other with the same security as the traveller journeys in England, and law and justice are supreme.

It might be supposed that, if the king himself did not transact the public business when he was upon the throne, at least his vizier or prime minister did. Such, however, was not the case. The vizier put neither his seal nor signature on any public orders. Probably, fear of the caprice which dictated all the proceedings of the king, and fear of the intrigues of the palace, were the causes of this strange omission. The only thing in the vizier's handwriting, when an order was passed, was the figure indicating the date, or day of the month. During times of festivity and religious fasts, papers accumulated to such an extent, that a miscellaneous bundle was tied up by a string, and the vizier put the figure indicating the day of the month, outside, once for all, and then his deputies, favourites, or secretaries, passed the orders. Nothing but the figure, in the vizier's hand-writing, attested the genuineness of the order, and that figure he himself could not truly swear to in a month. Thus, he could always repudiate any order that turned out to be obnoxious, and the writer of it would probably be warned in time to make his escape.<sup>1</sup>

These deputies, favourites, and secretaries of the vizier were of course perfectly aware of the large sums of money which he illegally received as gratuities, or *nuzzaranas*, and they took care that further exactions were made on their own account. Thus, all were bound together by a common interest, and they well knew that, although they might be in disgrace one day, their turn would come again after a little, when the storm had blown over, and their offence was forgotten.

In October 1850 Hussun Khan, one of the king's pages,

<sup>1</sup> See Sleeman, *Journey*, i, 178-82.

whose duty it was to submit letters and documents to the king, fell under his majesty's displeasure, and his estate was confiscated, and his house searched. Amongst his papers, several of the resident's official notes to the king were found unopened, some of them marked 'emergent'. Now, it must be evident that Hussun Khan found the evil of not delivering such letters the less evil of the two—the anger of an unprincipled tyrant falling usually in the first instance on the bearer of unpleasant tidings.

Under former sovereigns, from ten to fifteen per cent. of the net collections of revenue found their way into the hands of the minister and his satellites; but, under the reign of Wajid Aly, not less than twenty-five per cent. were thus embezzled; and, in fact, things were coming to such a pass in Lucknow, that, although his father left in the treasury nearly a million and a half of money, on his death, in 1847, the ex-king was deeply embarrassed as early as 1850—all the revenue and all the savings in the treasury having been spent, and no money forthcoming to pay troops or public-servants of any kind, except those in immediate attendance on the court.

'Under the present wretched system,' wrote Sir W. Sleeman in 1851, 'the contractors who have the farm of the revenue let out districts to subordinate officers, who abuse their authority as much as contractors and court favourites abuse theirs, and commit all kinds of outrages on the unoffending people. Security to life and property is disregarded and is unknown.'<sup>1</sup>

And again he writes: 'In this overgrown city (Lucknow) there is a perpetual turmoil of processions, illuminations, and festivities. The sovereign spends all that he can get on them, and has not the slightest wish to perpetuate his name by the construction of any useful or even ornamental work beyond its suburbs. All the members of his family, and of the city aristocracy, follow his example, and spend their means in the same way. Utterly indifferent to the feelings and opinions of the landed aristocracy and the people of

<sup>1</sup> *Journey through Oudh*, i. 202.

the country, with whom they have no sympathy whatever, they spend all that they can obtain from the public in gratifying the vitiated tastes of the overgrown metropolis. The king is utterly indifferent to the duties and responsibilities of his high office, and to the sufferings of the many millions subject to his rule. His time and attention are devoted entirely to the pursuit of personal gratifications. He associates with none but such as contribute to such gratification—women, singers, fiddlers, and eunuchs. He never, I believe, reads or hears any petition from his suffering people, any report from his local officers, civil or military, or, in fact, functionaries of any kind. He takes no interest whatever in public affairs, and appears to care nothing whatever about them.'

When such was the state of the court, and of Lucknow, it may be easily conceived what the condition of the more remote districts of the country was. Fortunately, however, we are not left to conjecture in this matter. In 1850 and 1851, Sir W. Sleeman himself went through the country, saw everything with his own eyes, and has left on record the results of his inspection. The following details, relative to the sufferings of the agricultural population, are partly drawn from Sir William's narrative, and partly derived from information I have myself received from the villagers in going through the country on official tours.

In the Durriabad district, Bhooree Khan was one of the most notorious leaders of robbers and dacoits, from 1846 to 1851, and the government was unable or unwilling to punish his misconduct. In 1848, he attacked a village in the neighbourhood of Redowly, and, having driven off a hundred and fifty head of cattle, he seized Ousan, an Upuddhya Brahman, and Peer Khan, a Mussulman, two of the wealthiest inhabitants, with their sons, in order to extort ransom from them. Ousan's ransom was fixed at 1,200 rupees (£120), and Peer Kahn's at 800 rupees (£80). Ousan himself was let go in order that he might raise the money, while his two sons, fourteen and sixteen years of age respectively, were retained as hostages. Ousan could only raise 700

rupees (£70), which amount was sent. Bhooree Khan was not satisfied, and, on the expiration of the time allowed, brought out the two boys, half starved, from their place of confinement, with fetters on their legs and bamboo collars round their necks. Having tied them to two trees, he and his band shot at them with bows and arrows, and left them so to die.

Peer Khan had no sons ; but his two younger brothers were seized as hostages, whilst the unfortunate man himself was allowed to go to procure the amount of ransom. As this amount was not forthcoming at the appointed time, Bhooree Khan had the two young men beaten with sticks, iron spikes driven up under their nails, their eyelids sewn up with needle and thread, their beards burned off with lighted flambeaux, and other tortures inflicted that cannot be particularized. Next day, Peer Khan brought the amount, 800 rupees, and his brothers, more dead than alive, were released. One of them died a day or two afterwards of the sufferings he had endured ; the other lived, impotent and a cripple.

This same Bhooree Khan next year attacked the house of Dulla, the most opulent merchant of Muhdoompore, and succeeded in seizing his son Nychint, and his grandson, son of Nychint, Ajoodhya by name. The females of the family fortunately escaped, and the robbers could not find the treasures of which they were in search, but which they knew were buried somewhere in or near the house. A Brahman, named Cheyn, who knew Dulla, and knew also where the treasure was buried, was also made prisoner.

Next day, Bhooree Khan brought forth Nychint, and ordered him to point out where the valuables were buried. This he would not do, and Bhooree Khan had four tent-pegs driven into the ground, placed Nychint on his face on the ground, and had his feet and hands tied to the pegs. He then had the unfortunate prisoner burnt to the bone in several places with red-hot ranirods, but Nychint still refused to point out the treasure.

A large brass vessel of oil was then heated to the boiling-

point, and the boiling oil was poured over Nychint's body—the skin peeling off, and the poor sufferer becoming insensible. When Nychint recovered his senses, he pointed out the spot. Property in gold, silver, brass vessels, and grain, to the amount of 150,000 rupees (£15,000), is said to have been carried off by the freebooter. Nychint was unbound and released, but died the same night.

Such narratives might be indefinitely multiplied, with more horrible tales of torture inflicted upon unoffending women and girls, but I refrain. In commenting on this history of Bhooree Khan, Sir W. Sleeman writes: 'An Englishman may ask how it is that a wretch guilty of such cruelties to men who have never injured him, to innocent and unoffending women and children, can find, in a society where slavery is not recognized, men to assist him in inflicting them, and landholders of high rank and large possessions to screen and shelter him when pursued by government. For a solution of this problem he must go back to the middle ages, in England and the other nations of Europe, when the baronial proprietors of the soil, too strong for their sovereigns committed the same cruelties, found the same willing instruments in their retainers, and members of the same class of landed proprietors, to screen, shelter and encourage them in their iniquities.

'They acquiesce in the atrocities committed by one who is in armed opposition to the government to-day, and they aid him in his enterprises, openly or secretly, because they know that they may be in the same condition, and require the same aid from him to-morrow; that the more sturdy the resistance made by one, the less likely will the government officers be to rouse the resistance of the others. They do not sympathize with those who suffer from his depredations, or aid the government officers in protecting them, because they know that they could not support the means required to enable them successfully to contend with their sovereign and reduce him to terms, without plundering and occasionally murdering the innocent of all ages and both sexes, and that they may have to raise the same

means for a similar contest to-morrow. They are satisfied, therefore, if they can save their own tenants from pillage and slaughter. They find moreover that the sufferings of others enable them to get cultivators and useful tenants of all kinds upon their own estates on easier terms ; whilst it induces the smaller proprietors around to yield up their lands and become their tenants with less difficulty. It was in the same manner that the great feudal barons aggrandized themselves in England, and in the other countries of Europe, in the middle ages.'

Happily this state of things is now at an end. The large landholders know that they cannot resist the power of the British government. They have been conciliated by judicious concessions, their estates guaranteed to them in perpetuity, and many of them have been invested with judicial powers, which they exercise, for the most part, with judgement and discretion. That one or two of them should have abused their power, and endeavoured to use that as an instrument of oppression which was granted for the public good, was but to be expected in the nature of things. But that the country has entered upon a career of prosperity, which, if peace be continued, will soon render it the garden of India, is undoubted.

In the meantime, the folly of the ex-king and his court continues as great as ever. His palace, at Garden Reach in Calcutta, is the Alsatia of India, and the following extract from a late number of the Calcutta *Hurkaru* newspaper (May 1864) shows that the career of insensate folly commenced in Lucknow, when ruling an extensive country, continues unabated in the comparative retirement of his pensioned idleness :—

'The ex-king of Oudh has, with the pious resignation of ancient heroes, subsided into the happy and contented enjoyment of his present state. His Majesty's time is equally divided between religious exercises, which he has never neglected, even during his worst days, and the care and collection of wild animals of every kind. It is true that the royal tastes are occasionally rather expensive, subjecting

the royal exchequer to sudden and extraordinary demands, and the accountant-general of the royal revenues to cruel embarrassments. But the pursuit of knowledge, even under difficulties, is held to be laudable, and there are those about his Majesty's person who take care that his love of nature shall never lack encouragement and gratification.

'We do not know whether they belong to the scientific society recently established by an enterprising and learned moolvie of Ghazecpore, which boasts the duke of Argyle for its president and patron, and which dedicates its books to his grace. But the zeal with which they keep alive the royal devotion to natural history, within the purlieus of Garden Reach, entitles them to any distinction within the power of the society to confer.

'It is nothing unusual for them to present his majesty with a pair of peacocks, purchased for thirty thousand rupees (£3,000); or a cage of canaries of a remarkable description, for half a lac of rupees (£5,000).

'It is enough that a beast or a bird, even of the commonest kind, should have some unusual mark or feature about it, so as to be quite unlike others of the same species, and it obtains a place at once in the royal menagerie, and displaces some thousands of rupees from the royal treasure-chests.

'The other day, a pair of vultures, a species of bird remarkable for the beauty and richness of their plumage, and the gracefulness of their movements, were brought before the ex-king, and a warty excrescence on the head of each—certainly improving their appearance—was pointed out. The creatures were hugely admired, and the man who brought them was asked to name his price. "Fifty thousand rupees" (£5,000). "Fifty thousand rupees! well, let it be fifty thousand," and the accountant-general was ordered to pay up. But that high dignitary found no more than thirty-five thousand in the royal treasury, and that amount was ordinarily retained, as a reserve fund, to meet extraordinary calls. This faithful servant therefore demurred to parting with the last rupee before the next pay day. He



was alternately laughed and frowned out of his scruples, and the entire amount went in part payment for the vultures.

'But there remained a balance of fifteen thousand rupees (£1,500) to be paid, and neither cash nor credit was to be had.

'In this dilemma, one of the two golden bedsteads, made during the reign of the great Saadut Aly Khan, was broken up, melted down, and the balance paid.

'These matters are not intruded on the public out of an idle passion for gossip. They prove how much philosophy may do to reconcile one to the loss of a throne and kingdom; and truly thankful the tax-payers of India ought to be that, under the enlightened and strictly honest guiding of the courtiers, by whom the ex-king is surrounded, his majesty is making such excellent use of their money.'

The ex-king's pension is a lac of rupees a month, or £120,000 a year.

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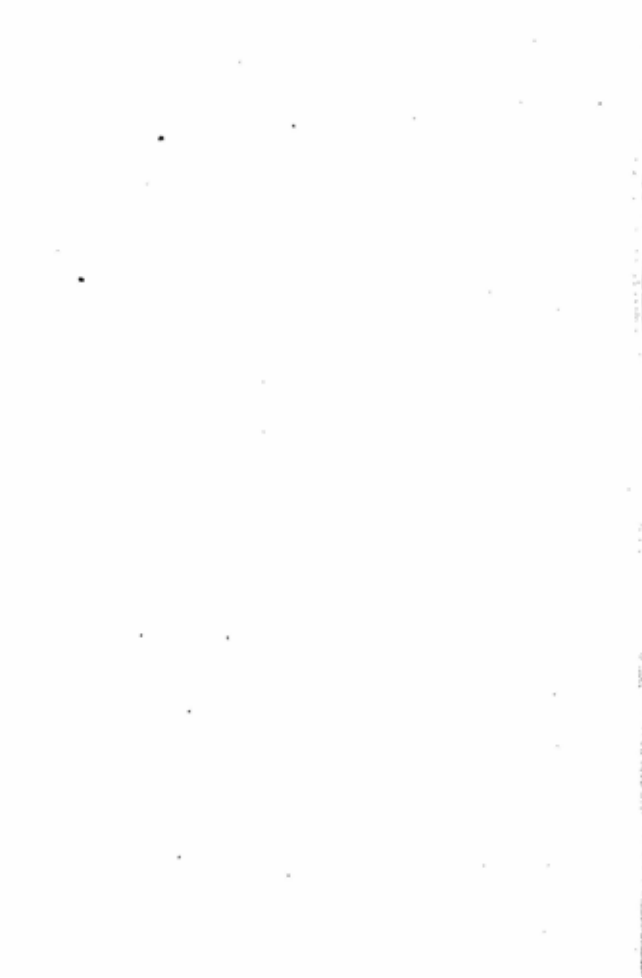
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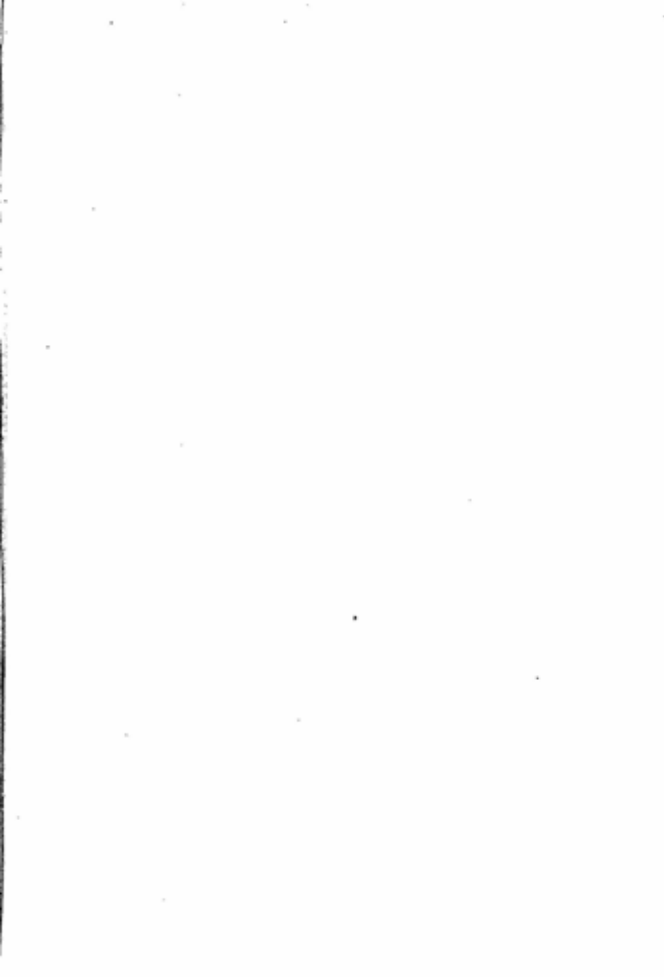
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